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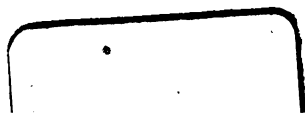
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MYSTERIES

ELUCIDATED,

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

DANISH MASSACRE, MONMOUTH, &c.

VOL. III.



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MYSTERIES ELUCIDATED.

CHAP. I.

Yee goddess, how ys a loverres temper-formed !
Sometymes the samme thyng wyll both bane and blesse.

CHATTERTON.

MANY days had not passed, when Lambert, eager to know Ella's real sentiments respecting De Vallenciennes, ventured to hint his wishes for a knowledge of her intentions, as to admitting or denying his visits. The modest suffusion which animated her pale

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B

cheek,

cheek, at an intimation so unequivocal, would have deterred any one, less interested in her welfare; but Lambert, to an affection truly paternal, joined the sincerity of a Christian; nor scrupled, as he now hoped she had acquired a little more firmness of spirit, to enter upon the subject with a freedom, calculated to relieve, rather than distress.

He had seen, and pitied the struggles, which a delicate sense of her own situation had occasionally created, and had more than once discovered, in the features of her character, that ingenuousness which intitled her to every allowance. This, then, was the crisis, which he hoped would elucidate her ideas on a matter so important; but when, in answer to his remark, that Raymond had behaved with proper decency in protracting his appearance at the cottage,

Ella noticed the beauty of the declining sun, tinging with a mild and yellow lustre,
the

the extensive flat which spread itself along the edge of the vast woods.

Lambert felt a little concerned, for a duplicity, which the delicacy he could yet allow for, hardly pleaded excuse ; and turning from her in a grave silence, expressed, by that rejection of her remark, some little displeasure.

Conscious she had offended him, and equally so of the cause, the gentle creature was both sorry and ashamed ; and after wiping away an innocent tear, she begged him to renew the observation she had endeavoured to suppress.

He kissed the hand she passed through his arm, and with the benignity of a fond parent, pressed her to his bosom.

“ You are indeed,” said Ella, in a sobbing accent, “ the friend of my youth, the protector of my honour, and the strengthener of my principles, and I am to blame to with-

hold from you even the most secret whisperings of an unguarded heart. I can trust my good Lambert with the inmost sentiments of my soul; and why not," raising her voice as a recollection of the dignity she dreaded to forfeit, animated both her countenance and action.

" Yes, Lambert, I doubt not but you have discovered the partiality which I hardly dare own to myself; but believe your poor Ella, that however Raymond's merit (which even the Countess of Lancaster recommended in the strongest, though most mysterious terms) however I repeat, that merit may dazzle—it shall never blind me to the full sense of what I owe to my sex. My origin, whatever that may be, or the virtue, which I trust will ever be the leading trait in my character."

Lambert could scarcely forbear an exulting plaudit, which he conceived due to this frank confession, and felt rather awkward in the situation

situation of a reprovcr, when he considered the amiable candour he had too roughly stimulated. To be the guardian and adviser of so sweet, (and as he reasonably imagined, so *noble* a creature) was an honour he gloried in; but his love was still greater than his admiration, and the respect he readily accorded to her, as a delicate female, was accompanied by the most decided esteem for her excellent qualities. Her society, her duteous attention, and submission to his experience, was almost a renovation of youth to Lambert, and he looked forward with a regret, uncontrouled even by his pious hopes, to the moment when he must leave so fair a blossom, to hazard a thousand dangers. But when he considered her innocence, and the rectitude of her principles, he condemned himself for the distrust of that Providence, which signalizes itself in the peculiar care of untainted virtue.

A little recovered from the embarrassment he had endured, Lambert, as they were entering the house, reassumed his hint relative

to De Vallenciennes, and received Ella's refusal to his visits, couched in the strongest terms. He then mentioned his doubts of Raymond's acceding to her restrictions, owning he had long discovered the partiality and strong attachment evinced by him, whose impatience he expected would begin again to shew itself, as six weeks were now elapsed since that impetuous young man had received Lambert's promise to be mindful of his cause; and he even feared he might break in upon that solitude, Ella so obstinately indulged.

To this information, she opposed only a mournful silence; but when her aged friend confessed his inability to suggest any probable excuse for denying him the consolation of her company,

"Tell him," said the weeping girl, "that my unhappy fate prevents ——"

"Not the wretched Raymond's attempts to see his adored Ella."

"Forgive,"

“Forgive,” said the distressed youth, who but the moment before had reach’d the unclosed door of the cottage, and had overheard her last words;

“Forgive this encroachment on your delicacy, since more than wealth, or even life, depends upon my favourable reception. Lambert has deceived me, he has been faithless to his trust. O, Ella, I expected he would have pleaded my cause; the cause of Lord Berkley’s friend, and the favourite of your revered Lady Lancaster; but I pardon him, since his defection arises from a superior regard to what I am fearful were your injunctions. I see I have disturbed you—be composed, my Ella—we will talk of our common friends, and yet that can afford you no pleasure.”

“Have you obeyed, then, their very kind invitation,” asked the terrified maid, happy to lead from the first subject, and trembling lest her ancient host should take offence at

his free expressions; but Lambert was not inwardly displeased at an event, which he hoped would rouse her mind from its painful stupor.

Raymond's answer to her question, naturally combined the many incidents of his wayward fortune, which not only foreran, but succeeded that warm and mysterious request of the Countess.

Ella listened, with an agitated heart, to the sad revolutions of his fate—now weeping for the wretched Edward—now trembling for her lover's safety at Spencer House; but when, in the course of his narrative, she discovered *him* to be the object which had so much alarmed her, previous to her arrival at Mortimer's stables, her bosom beat with a more perceptible motion, for in the comparison which they made of the transactions of that fearful night, the hour, as much as she could remember, tallied with that in which he passed the old wall; and while she silently lamented

mented the unlucky chance that had deprived her of his protection ; *he* more openly execrated his own unhappiness, in missing, perhaps, the most eventful moment of her life, in which his interference might have proved essentially serviceable.

“ And why,” interrupted the attentive Lambert, “ do you arraign that Providence, which most undoubtedly conducted your steps wide of each other ; had you then met, it is likely my Adela, as well as myself, might have seen the dear child return in safety—but would she have been honoured with Lady Lancaster’s love, or Lord Berkley’s protection and esteem.”

“ No,” said De Vallenciennes, with an unguarded haughtiness, “ nor would she have been insulted by the horrid Mortimer.”

“ Possibly,” answered Lambert, in a cool neglectful accent, “ and it is equally to be inferred, that the sober disquisitions of experienced,

rienced age, may sometimes carry as much weight as the abrupt conclusions of misjudging youth."

Raymond stood corrected, and even felt the superiority he had given the humble Lambert, while his eye sunk under Ella's reproving glance; whose judgment, though it sided with her ancient guardian, met with a strong opposition from an attachment, which this interview had strengthened, though it produced no hopeful consequences. Wishing, therefore, to close this unprofitable conference, she arose to leave him.

"You are not going, my Ella—you must not leave me—nay"—rising also, and seizing her hand, "you *shall* not go, at least 'till I am encouraged to expect your consent to my repeated visits. My views are honourable, Lambert knows it."

Perplexed and irresolute, she was loth to offend, though his inflexibility seemed to increase,

crease, 'till it took the cast of compulsion. This was too much, and resolutely withdrawing her hand, with recovered spirit she resisted his violence.

“ You are rude, my Lord,” she cried, “ I will not be controuled ; if to Lady Lancaster’s partiality I owe my late recommendation to the service of the Queen, to her also I can hold myself accountable for my present conduct ; and the most I am at liberty to say on this point, is, that I will do nothing of consequence without her concurrence ; therefore, I expect to be unmolested, ’till you gain *her* sanction to your return hither.”

“ Her sanction !—oh disdainful cruel girl ; well, you know my admission to that Lady can be purchased only with life.”

Ella wept—alas, thought she, how gladly would I renounce the character of cruelty, if——

Raymond broke into this momentary meditation, for he derived new hope from her tears.

“ You consent, then, my beloved maid?”

“ To nothing, my Lord, that you can request on this head; but on this you may rely, while the cloud of mystery thus awfully thicken about us both, it totally precludes any further communication between us; it remains with you to find some method of application to that invaluable friend; to her I submit this cause, and to what she shall enjoin, I here protest to accede.”

“ There is no mystery, thou inexorable woman, that can forbid our union.—your birth is ——”

“ My Lord,” interferred Lambert, warmly, “ I must not have this dear creature thus distressed; you know not her sufferings; you know not her heart is involved in the deepest grief;

grief; it is an unmanly, I had almost said, cowardly, perseverance."

" Presumptuous old man," said the enraged youth, " Is this the assistance you promised?"

" You injure me, my Lord, I promised nothing against her interest, which I would forfeit the little remains of life to preserve. I *am* old, my Lord, or you would not use me thus; but were my immediate death to follow, I would be bold in the defence of this sweet innocent; what are your protestations, and what your honour, when the one is sullied by suing for considerations which delicacy forbids, and the other's clearly contradicted by unallowed expectations. You deny an option to the woman you hardly know; would you, by this behaviour, excite her aversion, whose preference you would insinuate, is of such consequence to your happiness; thus much I will honestly confess, that this preference which you seek, demands not
only

only gentler treatment to ripen it to your wishes, but a knowledge of your connexions, and many other incidents, which time alone can bring to light: be satisfied, then, with her prudent reference to Lady Lancaster, as well as the assurance which I again solemnly confirm, that should any accident deprive me of her sweet society, you shall be made acquainted with it."

During this spirited apostrophe, Raymond could scarcely conquer his boiling resentment, which threatened a terrible interruption; but there was an insinuation in the latter part of it, which insensibly lowered his inexcusable turbulence; but when Lambert added his request to Ella to retire, who again tremblingly arose, for her lover's impetuosity had obliged her to take her seat, he again declared she should not quit him 'till he was permitted to *hope*.

"Grant me," he cried, "the most distant, the most coldly expressed assent, it shall satisfy

satisfy me, but I *will* have hope, nor shall his frozen prudence prescribe the terms."

"Rash young man," said Lambert, "forbear this violence; is this your boasted affection? look at that sinking loveliness, whose peace you so wantonly trifle with; if you have humanity, suffer her to depart."

The tide of youthful discretion had reached its summit, and the helpless state of his adored Ella compleatly checked it, for she could no longer support a contest so ardent, but sunk insensible in the arms of her faithful attendant; and so much was his spirit conquered, as to plead only to stay the recovery of his beloved; this gratification was not long withheld.

Ella revived—she looked upon him with an aspect so interesting, so piteous, that while it commanded his commiseration, it increased his passion, and with a respectful awe he bowed

bowed over her hand, struggling with a tear which could not be repressed.

“ I leave you, Ella,” said he, “ in compliance to your uncommon delicacy ; when I am departed, remember me as one you may see no more ; I laugh at the prejudices of the vulgar, nor indulge in the visionary fancies of the age, but without submitting to fancy or prejudice, I feel this separation as the stroke of death.

Adieu, Lambert, pardon my vehemence—
I forgive yours.”

Ella lifted up her languid eye, which was fixed upon his graceful form, 'till the closed door shut him from her sight.

The claims of caution and character were now fulfilled ; long and painful had been her trial, and she had gained a hard earned victory ; it proved of service to her in
various

various instances; her eyes were open to that defect in his temper which required mortification, and which had lessened his importance in her estimation: it stole too, from her gloomy imagination, some of those ideas that were filled with her house's disgrace, and mixed, in future, with every melancholy thought.

Lambert was sorry, but he was not ashamed, and pitied the man whom yet he esteemed.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

© sovereign mistress of true melancholy ;
The poisonous damp of night dispunge upon me,
That life a very rebel to my will
May hang no longer on me.

SHAKESPEARE.

INVOLVED in deep and perplexing meditations, Raymond again plunged into the dreary woods, regardless of the fatigue of a long mornings walk, for he had wandered from Sir Joseline's, near Morpeth, in the full hope of seeing, and confessing to his Ella, the ardour of his attachment; but the unpleasant

pleasant reception he had met with, though it could not check the warmth of his affection, presented such difficulties to his sanguine imagination, as chill'd the glowing expectation that he had formed; and insensible to the length of his way, or the smallest sense of danger, he passed hastily on, unmindful of the last gleams of a setting sun, which streaming between the numerous branches, faded imperceptibly, and was soon succeeded by the mild and deep'ning shades of evening, by which time he had emerged from the woods, and entered upon a cross road that led to his friend's house.

The sky was beautifully serene, nor did the lightest breeze agitate the waters of an extensive lake, over which the busy swallows were gaily sailing, met, as it should seem, for the purpose of settling the manner of their intended departure, while several robins poured forth the low sweet strains of uninterrupted melody.

It

It was the very moment for retrospection, but our pensive traveller could advert to no theme but what was inimical to the charming scene. Fated to endure, even in the bosom of hope, the severity of disappointment; obliged to quit what *he* termed the *rational* pursuit of an adored object, and not certain but even his life depended more upon the coincidence of uncommon events, than upon the kindness of a friend, to whom his proud heart acknowledged the pecuniary favours he enjoyed: and added to all this, the painful uncertainty of his birth, what could retrospection afford to meliorate vexations like these—or what could futurity present to dissipate the gloom which over-hung his fairest prospects: the one obscured by painful mystery, the other poisoned by a formidable mixture of past sorrows.

Lady Lancaster had promised an explanation of his situation, but it might not extend to the discovery of his parents; and the means
she

he had prescribed, were now, as well as herself, entirely out of his power to visit or examine.

Thus engaged, he heeded not the advancing night, which long before his arrival at Morpeth, added its dreary horrors to those of the impending clouds, a circumstance he was not aware of, as the sun had set with unusual brilliancy; but awakened by the preluding drops that rattled among the dry and withered leaves on which he trod, he quickened his steps, and after a comfortless walk, presented himself to Sir Joseline, so entirely drenched by the heavy rain, that the careful Knight was eager to see him supplied with a change of garments, but it could not prevent the ill effects of a violent cold, which producing an access of fever, occasioned his confinement for several weeks, when aided by youth, and a constitution habitually hardy, he recovered his bodily vigour, though his mind remained feeble and energetic. Ella, the constant

constant theme of his waking thoughts—his nightly dreams, and lately feverish wanderings.

Ella had denied his visits, but he could once more see her; he could hear from her lips the doom he deprecated. Sir Joseline, to whom he imparted his resolution to return again to Lambert's, would have dissuaded him from his purpose, urging, as an argument against it, the appearance of several suspicious persons, who had lately been seen at Morpeth, and were uncommonly inquisitive respecting Sir Joseline's visitors and inmates. This was alarming, but by no means convincing, and the above resolution continuing in full force, he said no more, but leaving his friend to the quiet contemplation of his intended scheme, entered the house, for the beauty of a clear frosty evening had tempted them to descend the eminence, which sinking almost immediately from the gate of the front court, spread into a broad ample lawn; but

but Raymond defying a northern breeze, which sometimes renders the decline of autumn chilling and unpleasant, continued his walk, nor did the hazard of exposing his barely established health to the night air, deter him from rambling to a considerable distance; however, it grew late, and he turned back, leisurely measuring his steps, and still pursuing the excentric emotions of a fervid imagination, when a rustling in the thicket, near which his path lay, called off his attention from ideal objects, to present occurrences. He stop'd a moment, but saw nothing, and was passing on, when a violent blow upon the back of the head, brought him to the ground, and several men rushing on him, fastened his arms behind, before they suffered him to rise.

Weak and giddy with the hurt he had sustained, Raymond could scarcely sit the horse on which they placed him, but it was to no purpose to resist, or plead for liberty, since the

the number and ferociousness of his assailants, forbid such an attempt, and he readily concluded they were out-laws, who infested, in that reign, the unfrequented parts of Northumberland, and whose violence generally extended to the lives of those unhappy objects who fell into their merciless hands, so that he considered the painful and dangerous situation in which he rode, as a prelude to further cruelty.

The ruggedness of the road, and the haste with which they travelled, made it impossible for their wretched prisoner, pinioned as he was, to keep his seat; untying therefore the rope that confined his arms, they contrived so to surround him, as to prevent the possibility of his escape, and thus accompanied—sick, bleeding and defenceless, forboding a still more calamitous fate, and hurried along with un pitying brutality, the almost fainting De Vallenciennes was compelled to travel 'till the rising day induced his conductors to quit the direct road, and wind along the foot
of

of some hills, which sheltering them from observation, invited them to stop. In vain they offered Raymond a part of their coarse refreshment, which one of the fellows produced from a wallet, and the only use he made of some spirits that they gave him, was to wash the wound in his head, which he then covered with his handkerchief, after it had wiped away those tears which his exhausted strength and sad reflection extorted.

To the few questions he ventured to ask, the answers were rude, short, and unsatisfactory, though his apprehensions respecting their occupations, gathered no strength from their replies, and he was led to ascribe this repeated attack upon his liberty and safety, to the hidden agency of his enemy Mortimer.

Unmoved by his petition for a longer rest, they again mounted their horses, nor

halted till the close of day, when Raymond was astonished, and struck with a secret dread, as he perceived from an open tract over which they were travelling, the German ocean rolling turbulently in upon the land, which gently descended to the level of the water, and as they approached nearer he discerned a vessel seemingly aground, near a small solitary house distinguished by a weather-beaten sign. In vain Raymond looked round for some assistance.

Two or three sailors were standing before the habitation he had noticed ; but they apparently belonged to his savage party, as they hailed them when they arrived in a manner that seemed to indicate an expectation of seeing them sooner.

The business of dismounting was soon completed, and Raymond was suffered to seat himself near a smoky sea-coal fire, where several more sailors were expressing their
fears

fears of a stormy night, and one of them hoped they should not be obliged to turn out before morning, though he supposed *now* they must obey orders.

“ Yes,” thought the prisoner, “ it is as I feared—that vessel is destined to convey the miserable De Vallenciennes from all he loves, all he respects—and, O that he were authorized to say, from all he endures.”

With a sort of grumbling civility, he, who seemed to command the rest of his guards, again invited Raymond to eat. — This he no longer refused; the claims of nature were too strong to be resisted, and he found the advantage of it even in his spirits; nay, in defiance of every suspected evil, a latent hope offered itself which he eagerly cherished, although placed between two of his watchful attendants. As the night advanced, the old boatswain’s prophesy appeared to be hourly fulfilling.

The wind in sudden and violent gusts shook the rude habitation, while the sea roared with a tremendous noise, and a tumult of a different complexion added to the deafning confusion.

The sailors were called to their duty—the brig was afloat—and the passengers were desired to be ready. Three of them made no opposition, while the other three (for Raymond, to his sorrow, now knew that himself and guards were meant by the seamen) resolutely declared they would not embark in such foul weather, and kept to their resolution in defiance of their companions, who went out to consult the boatswain.

His tone now was extremely changed, and while he secretly pocketed a handful of marks, which the Chief had given him, swore there was not a cap-full of wind, and what there was, was off shore; for his part he would sail at the top of the tide, and that would be in an hour.

Still

Still the men were obstinate, and kept their seats. The old seaman finding nothing was to be done in public, beckoned them into another room, and left Raymond almost alone, when again his reflections turned upon a situation so apparently desolate, as to banish for a moment the before-mentioned hope. It was true, the dissention which evidently increased among the men, made the certainty of his departure rather dubious; but he could deduce no comfort from an event not only precarious, but as it might prove dangerous even to his safety, as, at any rate, the security of their prisoner upon any, even the most desperate, terms, was an obvious motive with them all, and he knew not but his very life depended upon his departure from England.

To give poignancy to these suspicions, he listened in silent agony to the boatswain's discourse with his gaoler's, which being carried on in a loud and ardent whispering,

several portentous expressions reached his ear, and, with a breathless agitation, he perceived his fate hang upon the present exigence.

"I have nothing to do with that," said the boatswain, in answer to something hinted at by one of the men.

"May be not," replied he; "but True, life is sweet——He must die, or——you are well paid——Orders shall be obeyed."

"Never," said the old Tarpaulin, who now raising his voice, gave Raymond an opportunity of hearing the whole of his answer.

"Never, by G—d.—He seems a noble fellow.—Such villany befits only a land-lubber.—Tom Bates's name shall never be lugged in to such a d——d purpose; and as to your dog of an employer, he'll be brought up

up with a wet sail, when he reaches the port of H——ll."

Then lowering his accent, in reply to some unintelligible proposal: "Why, ay — that indeed alters the case; — but — your dog's tricks aboard our vessel —— Can't believe— Don't look like any such person Ah, didn't know that.—The King—did he, faith?—O then do what you please."

So saying, the consultation ended, and Raymond, more wretched than before, saw little else but scenes of murder in expectation; for he clearly understood the honest boatswain had warmly defended him, till they had contrived to throw upon him some odium respecting the unhappy Edward. — When the wretches re-entered, he could scarcely refrain, in the bitterness of his soul, to accelerate his fate by the keenest reproaches; but appalled by the ferocity of their manners, as well as countenances, and withheld by that

indescribable something, which so obstinately clings to the youthful and courageous heart, struggling, even at that awful moment, against the perplexities of his destiny, he so far conquered himself, as to betray no emotions which might lead them to suspect he had overheard them.

So contradictory are the operations of the human mind, and so hard totally to eradicate the sweet hope, which, in despite of every sad opposition, rises against the storm, and prepares us to encounter evils which present the most melancholy prospects ; for what was there in Raymond's fate to encourage the smallest suggestion of relief ?—Not one being on whom he could turn an eye for pity.—None from whom he could claim the slightest offices.—In every face he read either sullen defiance, or an insensible carelessness.—The house itself seemed an object of terror, situated far from the cheerful village, or populous town—ruinous, old, and roomy—adapted at best

best for the illegal practice of smuggling, which Raymond, in an interval of anxious thought, truly imagined to be the business of the seamen, with whom he was to fail.

Thus deeply oppressed, he found no sensation so grievous as his separation from Ella.—Here he felt himself a coward—nor were his present vexations totally unnecessary, as they helped partially, to deaden the passionate sentiments he had so long indulged.

C H A P. III.

Fortitude is opposed, as all know, to timidity—irresolution is a feeble and a wavering spirit.—It is placed like other virtues in the middle between the two extremes, standing at an equal distance from rashness on the one hand, and from pusillanimity on the other.

BLAIR.

AS no one attempted, by the smallest notice of the unhappy De Vallenciennes, to give any interruption to his anxious meditations, he preserved the most melancholy silence, and looking round the miserable room, sighed for the liberty he

had been so unjustly deprived of, when his attention was suddenly excited by the appearance of a man, whom he could but feebly discern through the smoke, that kept down by the wind pervaded every corner of the room; but who now, as the fire place was no longer crowded, advanced to a seat opposite Raymond.

His old tarpaulin jacket, red cap, and dirty trowsers, could not wholly conceal a noble figure and manly countenance, which was animated with eyes, whose thoughtful glances conveyed more meaning than vulgarity could express. To disregard an object so interesting, required greater distress than Raymond's to enforce, and he returned the stranger's ardent looks, with a fixed and awakened attention.

The storm had now increased to a terrifying height, and threatened destruction to the vessel, which forced from her station, was

riding close in shore, and to which every gust produced some new damage, as she frequently struck against the old wharfing that defended a small head-land to the South of her station. Several of the sailors now found it absolutely necessary to go on board to assist the others on shore, in getting her out to sea, and for the quicker dispatch they were accompanied by three of the intended passengers. It was with considerable difficulty they could set some of the sails, and before they were properly fixed, a sudden veering of the wind drove them effectually beyond the possibility of help, upon a low bank of sand, which lay a little way out to sea, and exposed them to the effects of a furious surf that broke continually over it.

Raymond (to whom this singular incident was soon conveyed, by the uproar made by the seamen, who fortunately for themselves staid on shore) found something in it that secretly befriended him with a hope of deliverance, though

though from what quarter he could form no conjecture. The people of the house were evidently in the secret, and there were yet three of his enemies left, who were almost distracted at this untoward accident, freely accusing the poor sailors of carelessness in their duty.

To the connexion of landsmen they had been unused, and a bustle ensued, which threatened disagreeable consequences ; but the landlord, who had his private reasons for suppressing the tumult, whispered the Chief of the aggressors, who presently drew off his companions, and the public room was once more left to the quiet possession of the thoughtless tars, and having re-lighted their well-used pipes, they crowded towards the fire.

To this unwelcome intrusion the stranger reluctantly yielded, and was retreating to his first seat ; but Raymond courteously offering
his

his own, produced an answer in the French language. This was a lucky circumstance, and De Vallenciennes knowing his situation to be desperate, conceived some latent hope of assistance, even by the means of this person, to whom he ventured, in the same tongue, to give some short, though plain, hints of his danger, adding to them his name, with that of his suspected persecutor.

The man could not conceal his surprise, which increased Raymond's; nay there was a similarity of voice and manner to some ones he had formerly been acquainted with, and while he was musing upon this new perplexity, it was increased by another whispering address—namely, “If he wished to escape?”

To this he only sighed, and shook his head; but the stranger nodded and disappeared, and with him every hope his behaviour had encouraged.

The

The landlord, who had taken the men aside to appease them, now entered, observing to the sailors that his guests were impatient to be gone.

“ I suppose so,” answered one, in a sneering tone; “ but they must wait, master.”

He was continuing his furly negative — when a confused hallooing from abroad, now sinking, and now swelling, as the furious blasts and roaring surf permitted, alarmed them all, and the words—“ A wreck—a wreck”—at last became distinctly heard.

Thoughtless of their prisoner, the men, whom this noise had summoned from the inner room, and who dreaded to hear they had lost their companions, ran down to the shore with the sailors, expecting some terrible consequence. At this critical moment, while De Vallenciennes was silently commenting upon his own unhappy fate, the
stranger

stranger suddenly approached, in a sort of breathless agitation. He looked round—not a creature but Raymond was to be seen ; — then going to an inner door, he listened ; but the house seemed to be nearly evacuated, and, returning with the same remarkable eagerness, asked,

“ If Raymond could swim ? ”

“ He could.”

“ Then follow me,” and darting through a short passage, he opened a door that led into a back yard.

“ Now, then,” he cried, “ be bold and successful. A narrow creek bounded the premises, which winding round fell into the sea. Into this, then, they resolutely plunged, and waded to the opposite side. Not an instant could be spared for reflection. They ran as fast as their wet garments, and Raymond’s

mond's weakness, would permit; but the little remains of vigour, which his spirit had supplied, now became nearly exhausted, and he sunk by the side of his deliverer, entreating a few minutes respite."

" You know not your danger. They have certainly missed us, by those lights which flash on the hazy air."

" But may they not be assisting the wreck?"

" That was an invention of mine to deceive them, and give you an opportunity to escape. No doubt they are by this time undeceived."

" But see, my friend, the torches are extinguished."

" No matter, that is owing to the wind." So saying, he took him by the arm, and
almost

almost dragging the poor drooping De Valenciennes through every impediment, continued their tedious march over the broad deep marsh, which afforded a very difficult path, as they were obliged to shun the various roads that intersected and marked their boundaries; but with inconceivable terror they again descried a confused light, whose feeble glances resembled those of an uncertain lightning, though rather more stationary, it was evidently nearer than before, but not exactly in the same direction; yet this brought no consolation, as the darkness prevented their being able to ascertain whether they had not unluckily turned again towards the sea; that it spread so much above their level, was easily accounted for by the thickness of the air, which, as the wind was rather fallen, proved extremely foggy, what steps to take they knew not.

“ If they turned back, might not Raymond’s safety be again endangered? If they
went

went forward, what, in this uncertainty, might be termed forwards? Still the hazard was equal, and the roaring of the ocean to the left, did but increase this painful perplexity."

"I should imagine," said the generous stranger, "that, notwithstanding we can hear the waves so plainly, yet, as the sand perceptibly rises, we cannot be far from the higher ground, which seems to be in a line with that strange illumination. Come, dear friend, to *you* any change must be for the better, we will even venture; it is worth the hazard, we shall soon be convinced."

"At least, then, give me the comfort of knowing to whom I am indebted for a support and assistance so really essential; it will supply the energy of strength to my enfeebled limbs."

"Hear, then, thou unhappy son of the lost Despencer—I am Lord Henry Fitzroy,
pursued

pursued for some inscrutable reason by our common enemy, and forced in various disguises to wander a miserable emigrant. It was but yesterday I arrived from Holland, with the firm intention of applying to our virtuous King for redress, whose hatred of Mortimer he is above concealing."

Fitzroy then stopped ; but Raymond's agitation prevented any reply to this mysterious intelligence : That Lord Henry was fallen into disgrace was not surprising, when Mortimer's enmity to virtue and true dignity was considered ; but that *he* should have gone such lengths to serve one so nearly connected with the supposed murderer of his brother, was a paradox inexplicable.

" I guess at the reason of your silence, Raymond," he resumed ; " but have patience, and do not forget that a Knight of Malta lives not wholly for himself ; restrain, my good young man, for such I have reason
to

to think you, the gratitude which seems bursting from your lips; perhaps the time is not far off when we shall have more leisure for explanation, and sure my eyes deceive me, or I behold the towers of some vast building rising through the gloom. Lord Henry was right, and, to their inexpressible comfort, the light, which had given them so much uneasiness, appeared from the gothic window above the great entrance of the fabric."

A monastery, for such it proved, was a most desirable asylum to people in such a deplorable situation, and they ventured to find a horn which hung by the side of a massy gate, that connected a thick wall, which at some distance surrounded the whole edifice, including the front court, gardens behind, and various offices on each side. Here they stood listening in vain for some testimony of their being heard; but all was profoundly silent. That the place was inhabited they could

could not doubt, as the light still streamed through the window, seemingly intermitting, as those who might be in the room occasionally passed between that and its rays.

Lord Henry again tried the horn, but with no better success; and as he withdrew his hand from it, he struck the lock of the gate, which, after some little trial, yielded to his efforts, and they entered the court, which our weary travellers found enclosed by two rows of cloisters, that supported the wings of the building.

The light, which was now gradually declining, convinced them that the inhabitants were retiring to rest; and Raymond advancing, lifted the heavy knocker belonging to the great door, repeating the strokes with an energy, which nothing but a hope of relief could supply.

A

A voice within now resounded through the interior of the fabric, and demanded their names, and business.—Fitzroy in a few words said,

“ They had been shipwrecked, and humbly entreated shelter for that night.”

No answer being given, and the same stillness again prevailing, they were turning in mute despair to depart—when suddenly they heard the heavy bars let down. The bolts were undrawn, and the porter, who fixed upon the countenance of the disguised Lord Henry, a look of wild surprise, as he was closing the heavy doors; nor could he take his eye from the singular contrast his noble figure opposed to the squallid garments that disgraced it, while he admitted them into a hall so vast, that the single lamp he carried left most of it in deep obscurity, while the footsteps whispered along the walls.

With

With entire cordiality the Superior received them in the refectory, which he had just quitted, when their arrival recalled him from his chamber to perform the duties of hospitality. Perceiving their desolate appearance, he immediately ordered them some dry and warm apparel, and concluding Lord Henry to be nothing more than a common sailor, he was recommended to the care of the porter.

Raymond looked extremely confounded, and was ready to hazard the discovery of his deliverer's title, rather than he should be thus degraded.

Fitzroy smiled at his anxiety, and guessing he should be in no danger from the venerable father, whose revenues, with every ecclesiastical emolument Mortimer had attempted to lessen, and consequently had made the whole body of the church his enemies, freely confessed his dignity, with the reasons
that

that had induced him to wear such a wretched disguise, and received from the reverend Abbot, who frequently crossed himself during this explanation the gracefulest apologies for his oversight, taking care, by the elegance of their reception, to make every amends in his power.

While they sat at supper, Raymond taking occasion to mention the King, father Andrew informed them of his increasing dislike to Isabella's infatuation, respecting her infamous paramour — adding, “ That he had been heard to wish for some friend to rid him of that bane of his honour and peace.”

Raymond turned an ardent look upon his friend, comprising more than he chose to trust to the Abbot, whose connexions as half-brother to the Earl of Warwick, from whom he received continual intelligence, made that intelligence indisputable. He was impatient to retire, and as soon as he was alone with Lord Henry :

"Now," said he, "will my revenge be satisfied by Royal Authority.—Yes, my beloved Lord, I shall pierce the heart of that villain; and in so doing wipe off a part of that inestimable obligation you have this night conferred, and my sweet Ella too will no longer withhold her hand from the avenger of those insults her delicacy sustained."

"What mean you, Raymond? What, Ella, do *you* know, that has reason to complain of Mortimer?"

"Lord Berkley's Ella—Lady Lancaster, Lambert's Ella."

Raymond's impetuosity, as usual, stifled his caution; and he fixed his fine eyes in silent raptures upon Lord Henry, whose curiosity the repetition of such interesting names had inflamed to a painful degree.

"You

" You answer in riddles, my young friend. I do not understand the obscure reference."

" Ah! my Lord, would to the Holy Virgin I could explain them as I could wish; but all *I* know, the noble Fitzroy may command, yet, after the fatigues we have sustained, would not a few hours sleep ——."

" I must interrupt you, my son—if—he hesitated—if the maid you speak of be her, I—but be it as it may—I conjure you to satisfy my anxious suspicions.—Time enough afterwards for repose."

Raymond immediately went into, not only the accident which carried him to Lambert's, but entered into the particulars of what occurred there. His sudden and increasing passion for Ella, and every succeeding transaction in which he had been engaged, to the hour of their meeting that evening."

To his description of his disappointment, respecting the papers at Spencer-House, the voice he had heard, and the mystery of the prisoner in the dungeon, Fitzroy listened with an attention that almost suppressed his breath. It seemed connected with the awful fate of his unhappy family, and when De Vallenciennes concluded with Ella's *cruel*, as he termed it, rejection of his vows—a secret satisfaction communicated itself to Lord Henry's countenance. — It is true, he had hazarded his life to liberate the poor youth—prompted partly by his natural benevolence, as he conjectured, from common report, that he was a guiltless sufferer—still more by his detestation of Mortimer, and finally, from a regard to his vow as a Knight of Malta—to protect the defenceless; but this had nothing to do with his attachment to the heirs of his noble house—a dependent only upon the adventitious bounty — his birth doubtfully honourably at best : — It would be criminal, thought

thought Fitzroy, to encourage hopes so rashly grounded :—I will undeceive him.

He then, as if to return the confidence he had received, related the particulars of Ella's birth.—Her escape through *his* means from the hands of her enemy—acknowledged her for his niece—just hinted at the great estates she was entitled to—and declared his intention, when Mortimer was subdued, to restore her to the splendor of her former situation.

This discovery crushed at once De Vallenciennes' new raised hopes ;—every difficulty was increased—every prospect obscured. — In the cold and distant manner his professions were received by her uncle, he saw his destiny, and, after congratulating that Nobleman upon his relationship to such a lovely creature, dropped the subject.

It was then agreed they should hasten to London, as Fitzroy was eagerly desirous of developing

developing the mystery that hung about Spencer-House; and he proposed, should the Abbot consent to make use of his interest at Court, through the intervention of Warwick, as he determined to throw himself at Edward's feet for justice.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

O, Heavens ! the very same,
The softened image of my noble friend ;
Alive his every look—his every feature.

THOMPSON.

EAGER to indulge in privacy the gloomy forebodings of his harrassed mind, Raymond, unmindful of the pain his wound gave him, and to which a friendly Monk had applied some lenient herbs, quitted his chamber without disturbing Lord Henry, and as the morning was mild and pleasant, he de-

scended into the spacious garden belonging to the Monastery.

Before him lay a long walk, paved with small pebbles, and shaded by tall trees, the boughs of which had been cut and trained, so as to form a regular gothic arch, to which the solemn line of the silver firs gave an appearance something similar to the isle of a lofty cathedral; the rest of the garden was laid out in vast grass plots, unmeaning flower beds, gay with the sun-flower, holyhock, and China aster; — walks defended by thick hedges of yew, holly, or philerea; — with an olitory that yielded the choicest roots and vegetables—at the bottom of which a noble orchard extended to the boundaries of the grounds.

While he was pensively revolving the strange occurrences his noble friend had entrusted to him, a figure glided between the trees of an ancient wilderness that fronted the
the

the walk he was in, and which was separated from it by a piece of water that terminated the said walk.—He was by no means curious, but, as the person again emerged, as though following the serpentine direction of a narrow path, he continued looking, and soon discovered a female habit.

A Monk at this moment crossing near him, Raymond asked, "If that wilderness belonged to the Monastery?" and was answered in the negative—for that it was part of the demesne of the Lady of the Manor—the numerous chimnies of whose house rose above the old trees.

"And see," added the father, "yonder is the Dame herself; she is coming to Matin's, round by the orchard; but I hear the bell: If you wish, my son, to hear service, you have no time to lose."

The Monk then departed, and as he had also lost sight of the Lady, De Vallenciennes slowly returned to the house, and joined the holy fathers in their sacred worship. The fervor of their devotion—the melody of their voices—and the situation of his mind, co-operated to produce sensations, but seldom found resident in the bosom of youth—and Raymond attended with awful reverence to the whole performance. He was then retiring, but stopped to let the Superior pass, who had entered into conversation with the Lady of the Manor, a part of whose veil catching to the spikes of the altar-rail, he courteously unloosed it.

The Dame thanked him with a benevolent smile, and was passing on ;—but again looked back, checking her pace, as though she would have spoken.

The Superior then addressed Raymond politely, hoping his reception had been agreeable to his wishes.

“ You know this young man, Holy Father ?”

“ But, little Lady, he looks ill methinks.”

“ He has been in great danger.”

“ Of what nature ?”—The Father was perplexed.—He would not forfeit his veracity, and began to think his spiritual daughter rather inquisitive :—But Raymond hearing these questions immediately advanced, and offered to explain his situation.—Before he could fulfil his intention, she told him, still gazing earnestly, that she doubted not but his story must be interesting, therefore requested him to attend her after breakfast, when she should be able to allow more time for his communication.

This was readily promised, and Raymond went to join the Lord Fitzroy ; but on looking into the room, and not finding him there,

he conjectured that he should meet him in the refectory.—In this he was disappointed ; nor could the strictest inquiries prove successful. The gardens—the cemetery, were alike examined, but in vain. Raymond was astonished a Monk had seen him in deep conversation with the porter, but he also was missing. The whole of Fitzroy's behaviour was mysterious, and this sudden disappearance formed another link to the chain.

De Vallenciennes grew seriously uneasy.—Such behaviour militated against his general ideas of gratitude.—He would have apologized for his friend ; but it was impossible. Father Andrew generously excused what in Raymond's opinion was absolutely indefensible, and by his obliging conduct at breakfast, absolutely conciliated the affection of his honest young guest. The hour was now arrived when Raymond was to perform his appointment, and, with a palpitating heart, he set out from the Monastery, from which
the

the Manor-House was about half a mile distant.

He now found what they had the preceding night understood to be the roaring of the sea, was nothing more than a water-mill built over the creek they had waded through. Arriving at the front of the edifice, he stood a moment to contemplate its vastness, looking more like several houses connected together than only one Mansion. The windows were small and numerous, and at one of them Raymond could distinguish a female form, who retired as soon as she perceived him from the porch, which almost obscured the front door, covered as it was with vines ; a venerable servant approached to shew him in, and silently conducted him through the hall to a noble parlour beyond, which was hung with various portraits. On *one* his very soul seemed to hang with reverence and pity ; it was that of his dear murdered master.— His countenance impressed with the most touching

ask?—every feature—your voice—manners, no, I am not deceived :—Be firm, then, my soul, nor dread the awful trial.”

Her agitation—tears—and eager interrogatories, all pointed at some explanation, on which no doubt his future fortune, in some degree, depended—so that his heart, softened by the affecting picture before him, and fluttering to a painful violence, could scarcely announce the name of De Vallenciennes as a prelude to a farther communication.

Before the name had well dropped from his lips, she caught the hand he extended to support her sinking frame, and pointing expressively to the picture,

“ O nature !” she cried, “ how forcibly, even when most obscured, are thy operations! — Look, Raymond, at the dear and worshipped Edward : — In him behold — shame, dost thou give my feeble utterance
the

the hesitation of guilt."—She then made a powerful effort—drawing him still nearer.

" Now, then, Raymond, in that portrait you see your father—nay start not.—Poor—poor—youth—how I pity these agonies! — It is true he was murdered—basely murdered; but remember, in me—the widow of the respected Lancaster, who fell in the cause of his injured Prince—you now embrace an unhappy mother."

The scene now became too poignant for endurance, and when the revered Countess sunk insensible upon his shoulder, De Valenciennes, who joined his lips to her pale cheek, with difficulty summoned her attendants, and then retired to a window to collect his scattered and amazed senses, which were absolutely upon the moment of giving way to such desirable and astonishing events.

To

To find the Countess of Lancaster was his mother—that the King, he had so fervently loved, was his parent—that he owed his assassination to the uniform cruelty of his inhuman enemy—how did such a surprising discovery strengthen his resentment against Mortimer?

He turned once more to the picture, and fancied the features expressed a combination of grief and revenge. He could almost have supposed, at the moment of filial enthusiasm, that it reproached him with neglect. The tears ran down his face—he was ready to kneel before the worshipped form, and eagerly renewed his vows of vengeance against the Regicide.

To these reflections succeeded others, tinged with a brighter hue. He was no longer tormented with the dread of owing his existence to dishonourable parents—a descendant from Royalty—the offspring, he doubted

doubted not, of a private marriage — the only child of his noble mother, whose hereditary fortune was affluent: — How could a mind, naturally ambitious, always impetuous, resist the pleasure of such important intelligence; nay, his fervid imagination rested not even at a point so gratifying—it soared to the utmost pitch in his estimation of mutual bliss, and glanced at the probability of an union with Ella.

Here his meditations were suddenly interrupted.—His mother—now sacred—endearing appellation—his mother, whom the female servants had carried to another room, inquired for him, and as soon as he entered held out her hand for him to approach. The tears yet trembled in her eyes, which beamed with maternal affection, while she requested him, by the appellation of her dear child, to place himself near the couch.

Raymond silently obeyed, and the exhausted Lady tremulously asked, “ If his spirits were
equal

equal to another surprise—one, perhaps, superior, in his estimation, to that which had secured to them both such felicity? He shook his head:—Certainly there was nothing in Lady Lancaster's power to bestow, so essential to his happiness, as the discovery she had already made of their consanguinity, a faint smile announced her incredulity.

"I expected youthful curiosity," she replied, "would at least have urged an inquiry into my reason for again alarming your sensibility, as well as my motives for believing you the unfortunate descendant of ———; but seeing him eager to answer:

"We will speak of that at a more composed period; my spirits are too much fluttered," and she sighed deeply, "for such a momentous explanation."

She now sunk back, as if overcome by the recollection of scenes too painful for utterance,

ance, leaving Raymond in a state of anxiety the most inimical to the natural impetuosity of his disposition. — Her bosom seemed labouring with a mystery the more unaccountable, as she had so freely elucidated one superior to any she might have to explain of equal importance to himself.

It is true, there *was* a point on which hung the warmest hope a youthful heart could furnish; but it was more likely the Countess should be deficient in the knowledge of Ella's situation than that she should communicate any intelligence to him, and he sighed deeply at the idea of that lovely girl's inflexibility."

The sigh was audible. It caught Lady Lancafter's attention. She looked at him with an eye of melting pity, and holding out her hand :

"A

“ A few minutes only, my son, and I hope to relieve the disturbance in your bosom, which I have so blameably created.”

He bowed, with grateful and acquiescent respect, over the offered hand, and pressing it to his lips, quitted the room.

CHAP.

 CHAP. V.

What is the world to them,
 Who in each other clasp whatever fair
 High fancy forms, and lavish hearts can with.

THOMPSON.

PERPLEXED—though delighted—unsatisfied—yet possessing a blessing once thought for ever unattainable, De Vallenciennes experienced the torments of suspense in the very bosom of gratification; his reveries, which were painfully pleasing, soon received a desirable interruption by a messenger

sage from the Countess importing a wish to see him.

"Now, then, my child," she cried, as soon as he entered the room, "I will (if my weakened powers allow) cursorily touch upon those events which followed Lord Berkley's letter to you before you quitted his Castle."

"O, Madam!" interrupted Raymond, how much am I indebted —?"

"I know what you would say, my son:— That pardon was procured at a time when Mortimer thought he had hazarded too much in imprisoning so many innocent subjects — and it was given, as I have reason to think, from a spirit of bravery; in that he was not afraid to liberate one who was almost a witness of the Royal sacrifice."—She was now silent, and after pausing a few minutes, and wiping her eyes, she proceeded, and took
up

up her story from what had happened the morning after Ella's escape from Mortimer-House.

"My agitation, when questioned by the furious Queen, was not to be concealed. — Though weak and emaciated by a lingering illness, I was commanded to attend her in her dressing closet, where Lord Berkley was also in waiting to take her orders as Master of the Horse, and as I entered, the look of terror and vexation he regarded me with, was a sufficient intimation of what I had to expect. Her Highness saw me in the large mirror at which she stood, and turning about with the eyes of a basilisk, demanded where I had hidden my low-born pet?—In two words I expressly replied,

"No where."

"O my son, I shall not describe her shocking rage, except to say, that she called

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me ‘dissembling hypocrite, and bid me consider my chamber as my prison till her farther pleasure should be made known.’ I was preparing to obey, when Mortimer passing the door she requested his presence, and, deprived, by excess of rage, of her usual caution, abruptly charged him as the abettor of our sweet girl’s flight.”

The artful courtier started—but his detestable cunning did not absolutely forsake him, though I saw his lips turn pale and tremble at the unwelcome intelligence; for he contrived to turn the accusation upon Lord Berkley, whose servant had been remarked by some of the Earl’s attendants preparing the preceding night to obey his Lord’s orders, and this Mortimer recollected at the important moment, nor doubted but he was right in his charge.

For some moments my venerable friend permitted an attack, which was violent even

to scurrility, till the inflamed Earl yet more rudely indulged his talent for illiberal abuse, with so little regard to the dignity and honour of the noble Berkley, that, irritated beyond the dread of punishment, he scrupled not to charge Mortimer with the atrocious murder of our beloved Monarch.

This incautious accusation, almost within hearing of his son and successor (for the young Edward was then waiting in the house to accompany his worthless mother to the capital) brought on the unfortunate Nobleman their highest resentment, and he was confined in his room till the King had quitted the country, and then, as I was informed, he was conveyed under a strong guard to London. For myself, they were contented to make my imprisonment little more than nominal, and as the excellent Edward seems already to have shaken the power and influence of his enemies, they chose to give me that liberty they could not in prudence with-

hold, and soon after I left Mortimer-House, I heard they had thought proper to fly to Nottingham-Castle, where they still remain the scorn and hatred of the whole nation. I shall just observe, that the confusion and vexation which attended the events I have been speaking of, produced, in the mortified Isabella, the most violent hysterics, and her justly incensed son departed highly unsatisfied.

The Countess again paused, and Raymond was disappointed.

He had promised himself a sweet gratification, that of hearing his mother's opinion of Ella, of listening to her approbation of his passion, and that she would undertake to plead his cause with Lord Henry, should the Knight give her an opportunity, for that she was no stranger to his attachment, Lord Berkley had fully hinted to him : However, he curbed his impatience till the Countess,

somewhat recovering her voice and speech, renewed her story.

“ You may readily imagine I took advantage of the permission given me to retire from the Queen’s service ; nor did it give me the least pain to hear that Lady Duval was promoted to the distinguished station I had so long held under Isabella.—The dejection of spirits, which I had long endured, rendered my attendance irksome to a woman, whose black and guilty ideas required the strongest efforts to dissipate.—O how pleasant did the enjoyment of my own patrimony appear !—The tears my ancient servants shed when I returned seemed to drop upon my frozen heart—meliorating the cold and blighting effects of lasting sorrow.—My tenants too received me with the most joyful acclamations.”

“ Ah, Raymond ! at that moment I formed a resolution, in which *you*, my child, are

deeply interested."—She looked at him with a penetrating eye.

"But, perhaps, the wish I framed, even in the hour of despair, and which happier times alone could perfect, may now be futile."

Ella, the descendant of the good Fitzroy, is combined with —— : But before I proceed, say, Raymond, does that lovely creature still fill your hopes of temporal happiness ? nay, my beloved son, that sudden tear sufficiently explains the situation of your affections : Rise, then, kneel not to me, but listen in silence to what I have farther to tell, and to propose.

"O, Madam, forgive ; but I must speak, for do you not renew my hopes ? Forgive the humbled spirits that melt thus cowardly : Now, then, dearest mother, I wait the confirmation of those ——."

"Silence,

“ Silence, Raymond, you defeat your own wishes by this interruption.”

He bowed, and acquiesced, though his eyes continued to swim in floods of tenderness. —

“ Through a message sent to Berkley-Castle, I had been informed that Ella had quitted the cottage to which we sent her, and that she had ventured to explore her way to Lambert’s unattended, and I trembled to think of the danger she might incur in travelling alone ; but I remembered her perilous escape from the woods of Stanmore, and was silent ; so soon then as my little household was again established, I determined, if possible, to procure that society, which had sweetened so many painful hours at Mortimer-House ; for though Isabella kept the strictest watch over us both, there were moments which Ella would steal from her employment to comfort her poor friend.”

“ The groom of the chambers, he who let you in, was the person pitched upon to convey her hither. Observe,” seeing De Vallenciennes’ increasing agitation, “ you have promised patience. For a whole week I suffered the cruellest suspense, for he was absent eleven days. True, Oliver had taken three serving men as guards; but the journey I know to be dangerous. Sometimes it occurred to me, that Lambert could not yield her to my pressing entreaties, though I had sent such tokens as must have convinced Ella, at least, that there could be no deception.— If my fears were reprehensible, let the value of *this gem* be my excuse.”

So saying, she turned to a young person, who stood at the back of a couch, and raising the veil that covered her face, presented to her son, in all the blushing innocence of unstudied delicacy, the elegant, and almost fainting, Ella Fitzroy.

“ And

“ And now, Raymond,” feebly added the exhausted Lady, “ with this precious hand receive my best wishes and services to render it irrecoverably yours.”

The reader is free to imagine, from the character—the disposition—the tried affection—and late mortifications of this noble pair, what their sensations were at a moment of such unexpected felicity ; at the same time let us honour that purity of soul which restrained Raymond from violating the unbounded reverence due to the dignity of Lady Lancaster, by any impetuous expression of his feelings, at such an extatic moment, or increasing the modest confusion of his weeping, trembling Ella, to whom this wonderful event appeared as the bright gleam of long-suppressed hope, while to the Countess it shone as the cherishing radiance of comfort, dispersing the thick and watery clouds of long indulged grief ; nor could De Vallenciennes consider it otherwise than the first period of dawning happiness.

Overcome by the effects of this interesting scene, the Countess motioned to be supported to her chamber, and with a maternal smile accepted her beloved child's assistance, who suffered no one to partake the sacred office, and when she was somewhat composed dismissed her darling Ella, who weeping, trembling, though delighted, followed her noble friend's request to make every thing at Lancaster-Hall commodious and convenient to her son, who had withdrawn into the garden so soon as he had resigned his venerable charge.—With blushing eagerness the young Fitzroy executed, in a necessary degree, her friend's commands.—Refreshments were produced, and Raymond had the extreme pleasure of entertaining his adored Ella with a conversation, unembittered by successful argument, on the expectation, nay certainty of a cruel repulse.

He was even permitted to wipe from her soft eyes the tears his description of past dangers

dangers had induced. To his mysterious account of her revered uncle's flight from the Monastery she listened with an agonized attention ; that he should have passed a night so near to her, without any presentiment of her proximity, seemed more unfortunate than natural, and she wept with a bitterness that made Raymond repent his communication. With an intention of relieving her loaded mind, he adverted to the state of Lambert's health at the time of her leaving the good old man.—To this unlucky question her tears streamed afresh — Raymond was distressed, and remained silent, as he knew of no alleviation to this new sorrow ; but Ella struggling with her sobs, and almost ashamed of an imbecility, which paid so poor a compliment to his generous anxiety, begged he would pardon her for the tribute she could not withhold to such departed merit.

“ He is dead, then, my Ella.”

“ He is !—dear invaluable friend and protector.—Alas ! my Lord, the messenger of Lady Lancaster found us weeping over his palsied frame. Not more than two hours before he arrived, the poor Lambert deprived of speech and strength, fell suddenly against the door, and Lydia, who was better acquainted with the nature of such complaints, assured me he could not recover ! For several days the lamp of life seemed every moment upon the point of extinction ! Oliver expressed his fear of the Countess’s displeasure, saying, “ How consequential it might prove to my future expectations. — But I could not leave—but excuse.—I will only add, that Lambert commenced his beatitude before I left the peaceful cottage, and Lydia promising to see him laid decently in the earth, I left her with reluctance, as it was necessary somebody should be upon the spot to answer the demands of any one who might claim a relationship to his valuables at least.”

Before

Before Ella could well banish the traces of sorrow from her ingenuous countenance, she was summoned to attend her benefactress, who found herself sufficiently revived to join her dear children in the parlour, where they finished the day in that delightful calm, which generally succeeds the turbulence of heart-agitating joy.

CHAP.

C H A P. VI.

——— We may meet again, if Heav'n think fit;
A beam of comfort, like the moon thro' clouds,
Gilds the brown horror, and directs my way.

DRYDEN.

ALTHOUGH Raymónd might now be said to have in full prospect that pure and rational felicity, which time can only mellow without destroying, there was yet a latent idea that haunted his imagination to the exclusion of perfect happiness. The Countess was still silent respecting the mysterious

terious hints given in Lord Berkley's letter to him while a prisoner in that Nobleman's Castle; nor had she as yet been more explicit in regard to her acknowledged union with the unhappy Edward, whose cruel death he was more than ever determined to revenge.—The unknown captive too at Spencer-House, he was ready to fancy, claimed his assistance, to whom he was inclined to attribute the warning voice so often repeated. The gloom these reflections obtruded on his countenance could not escape an almost adoring mother's eye, who (as though she had penetrated the cause) took the earliest opportunity to satisfy him as to those points which were in her power to explain.—It is unnecessary to speak of De Vallenciennes's delight, when he found she could honourably acquit herself of the shadow of disgrace in the transaction which related to his origin.

“ Perhaps,” said the Countess, “ I was wrong for suffering the tender assiduities of
the

the heir apparent to overcome the scruples of prudence ; but, my dear child, we passed our juvenile days together. My mother, Lady Mary Fitzroy, who had married the cousin of Ella's grandfather, was fixed upon to nurse the Royal Infant, so that in fact he was my foster brother.—The little incidents which combined our affections, though slight in themselves, produced the most serious consequences. — Edward's attachment was discovered, and he was sent abroad, under the plausible pretence of engaging in the holy war.—You, whose heart is so completely possessed by the ungovernable passion, will, it is ~~likely~~, acquit your unfortunate parents for acting in defiance of higher authority ; at least, if it do not, I cannot condemn its rectitude.

“ Shall I confess, after this observation, that my beloved Edward contrived to gain over a Monk, who gave us the holy benediction, in the Abbey of Westminster, the week

week before he departed, and we agreed, through this man's means, to correspond by letter; the Prince always addressing me by my maiden name, which letters, with a ring, I entrusted to Lord Despencer's care, as I chose to preserve the testimonies of an affection I considered as my glory.—Two years elapsed before I was encouraged to expect the return of this noble, this beloved husband.—My mother, to whom I had discovered the important secret of our marriage, terrified, yet flattered, by the prospect of seeing her daughter raised to a dignity, to which her family could claim no pretensions, thought it necessary, for some time at least, to keep this rash step from her Lord, whose strict notions of probity and honour would have strongly militated against the shadow of concealment, which it was the more easy to do, as his duty, as governor to the Prince, obliged him to accompany him abroad, and *you*, the dear epitome of our Royal Edward, was obscurely ushered into a kingdom, which,

which, I fondly fancied, you were born to command”

“ Often, my son, have I wept over features whose earliest bloom in my indiscriminating judgment promised the full expanse of monarchical greatness, and once—O painful remembrance! as I was indulging the sad, fearful doubt of ever presenting you in all the graces of infancy to your father, of whose arrival I had as yet no expectation — his governor, whose long absence had favoured Lady Mary’s wishes to keep the awful secret, suddenly entered the room, where I was so sweetly, yet mournfully, engaged. Indeed, I never knew exactly whether this interview had been premeditated, from which I shrunk almost to fainting ; but it certainly produced the termination of every hope, and withered the golden blossoms, from which one might have expected the richest fruit.”

“ When I dared to lift my eye to a countenance, which had ever inspired more dread than
than

than duty, I again repelled the idea of encountering the storm of rage collecting there, and pressed to my bosom the infant, whose innocence I thought was equal at least to the rashness that had produced him. My mother, who had followed her Lord, now clasping her arm about us both, as if to shield us from the vengeance of insulted authority, and in a voice rendered tremulous by the tumultuous beatings of her affectionate heart, deprecated his wrath, while her tears mingled with mine on your polished cheek, and she even mentioned to venture *you* as the *legal* offspring of his Royal Matter."

"*Legal!*" cried my enraged father —
"Woman, you are deceived, as well as that lost, unhappy girl. Edward is returning from Syria, and is only detained by the noble Isabella, with whom he is daily expected to celebrate their nuptials: Think you, then, that the plea of a puling insignificant *child* will avail?"

"Alas!

“ Alas ! my stern, unpitying parent had struck the blow which required not the aid of irony and bitterness to sharpen its pangs. In the look I fearlessly fixed upon his unrelenting eyes—grief—horror—and despair—combined their fullest effect—and I only remember that, unable, as I imagined, to witness a distress so complete, he left me to the consolation of my only friend, whose fond attention again awakened me to a sense of my pitiable situation, and through whose means I afterwards received the fondest assurances of Edward’s love, though he scrupled not to tell me, that—“ His attachment to Gaveston having cooled his people’s affection, and led them to charge him with propensities beneath the dignity of a Monarch, he must, to appease them, give up the hope he had long entertained, of sharing with me the Throne of England, and that he had sent me a release from my matrimonial engagement procured from the Pope, though he should ever acknowledge me as the wife of his affection.”

“ O,

“ O, Raymond, do not blush for — : but excuse me, my son, I will only relate facts—for is not the dear suffering martyr entitled to absolution?—Yes, if tortures such as his —.”

She stopped in an agony of recollection.

Raymond glanced at the picture which hung before him :—There was a forcible appeal in every line of that interesting face, which claimed pity and pardon.—He turned away his overflowing eye, and the Countess proceeded.

“ Passing over my answer to this decisive letter, as well as the sorrow it had grounded in my loaded heart, I will just inform you, that my father, not satisfied with branding his grandchild with a reproachful stigma, insisted I should give my hand to the Earl of Lancaster, who was ready, he told me, to overlook the rashness of my *childish* conduct ;

duct ; I was at that period only seventeen.—
Alas ! how many melancholy scenes have distinguished my advancing years ! I shall not revive in a further detail of my sufferings the sad remembrance of my long, though unsuccessful, resistance to this apparent violation of those sacred rights my heart still appropriated.—Reduced by compulsion to accept the title of Countess of Lancaster, I solemnly determined to bear in silent submission my heavy lot.

“ About this period Lord Despencer’s family became distinguished by the unhappy King, who signified his pleasure that you should be sent for from Westphalia, at which place you have been consigned to the care of a distant relation, where my father had entreated you might be sent, and after whom you were named.

“ Thus were the means procured me of watching your dawning youth, though I was forbidden

forbidden to correspond even with the family of your protector, but I could sometimes meet you at Court.—I saw you the favourite of Edward and his first Minister—but I was uneasy.

“Despencer had *his minions* too.—Ranulph, who was entrusted with the secret of your birth, whose gentle manners accorded not with the dark and treacherous features of his soul, and the villany you this morning described, as flowing from his corrupted principles, confirm my suspicions.—This Ranulph had lifted his eye to my husband’s niece, and, irritated by her haughty refusal, dropped some alarming expressions respecting your legitimacy : However, he was silenced, and I was obliged to appear satisfied, though my heart condemned Despencer for thus needlessly betraying his awful trust, as it now condemns the wretch, who, knowing your illustrious origin, dared to plot against a life so valuable.

“ Resigned,

“ Resigned, though melancholy, I sunk into a calm stupor of inactive existence ; but I was soon roused.

“ The good Earl of Lancaster disappeared suddenly, at a time when he was deeply engaged in the internal commotions of this kingdom, and, O, Raymond ! to some concerted enemy was attributed the loss of an inestimable husband, to whose rational tenderness I had reason to ascribe the tranquillity I began to enjoy.

“ The reflections, induced by retrospection so painful, occasioned the Countess to make an affecting pause. It is true, there were circumstances in that Nobleman’s fate, which, it is presumed, never reached her ear, as they happened near the time of Raymond’s birth when she suffered a long confinement : It is equally to be supposed, that to the manner of his death she was likewise kept a stranger, as it was sudden, and in consequence

quence of the following incidents, at the period of Gaveston's ascendancy over the unhappy Edward, the Earl of Lancaster, in conjunction with Pembroke, Leicester, Warwick, and Hereford, headed the powerful Barons, who flew to arms for the suppression of that wretched minion.—This open contradiction to the Monarch's will consequently made him that Nobleman's enemy, and in a skirmish some time afterwards, when Lancaster was likewise active in his endeavours to crush Despencer, he was overpowered, and fell a victim to what might be called a mistaken endeavour to retrench the power of the favourite.

With these events, it appears very plainly, Lady Lancaster, from motives either of prudence or affection, was never fully acquainted, or she must have felt sufferings still more poignant, from the consideration, that to the parent of her son, a noble husband owed his death.

From Isabella, who owed her neither love or respect, the communication was scarcely to be expected. The mild and melancholy manners of the Countess accorded not with the despotic haughtiness of her mistress; she well knew the particulars of Lancaster's demise, but conceived a knowledge of it might render her unhappy attendant incapable of fulfilling the duties of her place; nor would she suffer her to leave the Court, probably that she might not hear the murmurs of a nation against her.

In France she knew her infamous secret would be safe, at least the Countess, by a constant attendance on her person, would be out of the reach of those reports which were so freely circulated to the Queen's disadvantage.

Why she was so anxious to keep her intercourse with Mortimer a secret from that Lady, can only be accounted for by that reluctance

reluctance even the vicious feel to expose their crimes to the cognizance of the good; at least, if this bad woman's conduct, in respect to the Countess, seemed at times a paradox in itself, it contradicted not the general tenor of her character, in which caprice obtained a considerable share.

C H A P. VII.

A distinction is to be made between fame and true honour :

The former is a loud and noisy applause ; the latter a more silent and internal homage.—Fame floats on the breath of the multitude, honour rests on the judgement of the thinking.—Fame may give praise, while it with-holds esteem.—True honour implies esteem mingled with respect.

BLAIR.

WHEN Lady Lancaſter had recovered ſpirits ſufficient to conclude her little Narrative, ſhe lamented, in expreſſive terms, the cruelty of Iſabella in denying her the pious conſolation ſhe ſo ardently wiſhed.

“ Think, my son,” she cried, “ how reluctant I was to be thus thrown back upon the stormy ocean of an unpitying world. — Indeed, I could have buried my sorrows in a convent ; but Isabella, from what motive I knew not, issued commands too despotic to be disputed, and I was compelled, as one of her household, to follow her to France, where she chose to stay till the Royal Sufferer, and his unhappy favourite, could no longer support the majority against her and Mortimer. Again my soul was pierced with anguish, nothing doubting but in their ruin yours must be involved, but only to the inanimate creation could my wretchedness be confided ; sad recourse for the desolate complainer ! — However, even that indulgence was soon denied by my continual attendance upon the capacious Queen, and I learned at length to gather the accumulating hoard within my miserable bosom : Judge then what were my feelings when our lovely Ella arrived. Sweet girl ! too much was I indebted to her ex-

emplary patience, since it procured me a frequent respite from the fatigue of listening to, and answering questions put only with a view to exercise a temper Isabella particularly contributed to injure."

Raymond would not interrupt a Narrative so necessary to the elucidation of the mystery which had so long checked the ardour of his spirit; but finding the Countess became suddenly silent, he ventured to ask her motive for so earnestly commanding him to secure the ring, and letters at Spencer-House.

"Merely, my son, to corroborate the oral confession I so eagerly wished to make; but doubtless they are gone or you——."

"I fear, indeed, the papers are destroyed; but, perhaps, I was fortunate as to the ring."

"Ah, dear pledge of innocent, though imprudent, affection," exclaimed Lady Lancaster,

caster, dropping a big tear on Raymond's hand, as he offered the inestimable gem:—
 “ It is, indeed, the memento of thy father's love.—See, my beloved, beneath this precious stone is a small, but sacred, lock of hair, twisted to represent an eternal attachment. *Eternal!*—ah, Raymond, how fallily do we appropriate in early youth the most indefinite terms to our own sense of right—feeble—vague and erroneous, as our judgments are, till experience, that too often destroys while it prunes the luxuriant shoots of immature growth, darkens the brilliant prospect, narrows our extended hopes, and reduces our vast expectations within the limits of reason.”

Again the Countess was silent.—In possessing the ring, she seemed to feel again the sensations which filled her soul, when Edward sportively placed it on his finger as the gift of one he dearly loved, and afterwards returned it to her, as fearful it might be found upon him, her name being joined in a curious device with his.

To rouse her from a contemplation which communicated a kind of stupor to her fine countenance, De Vallenciennes, who had as yet only hinted at the various sufferings he had endured, went into a regular history of them from the assassination of Despencer, omitting only his Royal Father's shocking fate, concluding with the hope, that, in the sweet society of Lancaster-House, he should lose every remembrance of past afflictions.

The entrance of Ella, before whom neither Lady Lancaster or her son chose to speak of their relative misfortunes, gave a pleasant turn to the conversation, though Raymond's ideas were still gloomy, nor could he readily assimilate them to the subject of the moment.

The Countess, who attributed his absences and unapt answers to their late conversation, endeavoured not only to supply his deficiencies, but in the attempt absolutely suppressed her

her own painful reflections.—He thanked her with a look of gratitude, and leaving the room, strove in solitude to arrange, with some degree of precision, his perplexed thoughts.

That Mortimer was still living was a reproach he could scarcely bear, as he now considered himself bound more than ever to extirpate that monster.—Besides an exploit so patriotic might be necessary to secure Lord Henry's full sanction to his union with Ella; for he knew not how far that Nobleman's rigid honour might extend, when he should hear that Raymond was produced under the auspices of a marriage, which had not only been fully dissolved by the Pope, but by another union.—He might, perhaps, have spared himself this reasoning, had the culpability of Ella's mother been explained to him; but that secret was in the bosoms of those who would rather not have removed the cloud which darkened this lovely creature's

origin, than extend its pernicious influence to the destruction of her peace.

The arrangement of this intention gave birth to a difficulty of magnitude.—Would his fond mother accept his reasons for thus venturing upon an enterprise which, manage it how he would, threatened his person with the most perilous hazard: Surely no, and when in Ella's modest eye and mantling cheek he saw the delicate, though silent, acknowledgment of mutual affection, how could he strike a blow, which might reach the happiness of those on earth the dearest to his soul?

Thus anxiously crept away hours, nay whole days, of uncertain determination, till at length he resolved to trust to that fortitude which had formerly softened Ella's trials, as well as to that dignity and strength of affection, which he hoped would instigate his mother to a wish of revenge.

Thus pensively engaged, he was standing in the recess of a window, which reached to the floor of his anti-room, and silently arranging

ranging his future proceedings, when the appearance of a man pacing slowly along the road, which was only separated from the side front of the house, by the Park paling, changed the course of his ideas.—It was apparent that he had business with Raymond, whose eye no sooner fell upon him than he held up a small paper, and beckened, as it were, with his other hand.—Somewhat surprised, De Vallenciennes stood still, while the man redoubled his attempts to gain his attention.—He at last succeeded—our young hero descended, and, going to the fence, demanded his business.

“ I was ordered to deliver my Lord this paper.”

“ From whom ?”

“ Lord Henry Fitzroy.”

In a tone of impatience Raymond was asking several hasty questions ; but the man seeming ignorant of that Nobleman's intentions, and referring to the written credentials, he was suffered to depart, but not before he

was discovered to be the porter, who had suddenly disappeared the morning of Lord Henry's flight.

"If that Nobleman's strange conduct had occasioned many unsatisfied conjectures, will not this letter explain them?"

Thus thought Raymond, as he hastened into a retired walk of the garden, unwilling to trust himself with intelligence which might create emotions too visible to be concealed, and which already deprived his fingers of their usual steadiness while he opened the paper; but what his feelings were, as he hastily threw his eye over the contents, may best be gathered from them.

LORD HENRY FITZROY,

TO

RAYMOND DE VALLENCIENNES.

"Let these lines be answered by your immediate presence at Fitzroy-Park.—Justice strikes

strikes the blow :—Hasten then to share the honour of uniting your cause with those of many warlike Knights, whose injuries have drawn the sword which must cut off England's bitter foe.—Wonder not at my absence; all shall be explained.—The bearer has orders to seek you first at the Nunnery—and if not there to pursue your steps.

“ Be secret—speedy—and successful.

H. F. Knight of Malta.”

“ *Many warlike Knights !*” repeated Raymond—“ useless competitors. Have any of them a cause so sacred as mine ?—But I come, Lord Henry.—Mortimer, beware of an open enemy.—Sweet Ella, adieu.—Lady Lancaster, be firm.”—He then determined to speak as lightly as possible of an event which sooner or later his mother knew was his positive purpose to engage in, and accordingly mentioned it that evening as a matter already settled.

Ella

Ella could not trust her voice to utter the dictates of her heart.—The Countess burst into tears, and sinking upon Ella's shoulder, clasped her as the only comfort of her widowed bosom.

“ You do not, my dear mother—you do not, my love,” said Raymond, taking a hand of each—“ You do not condemn a resolution founded upon principles your own conduct has hitherto justified.—Must Mortimer still live to stigmatize the son of the murdered Edward ?”

“ No,” said Lady Lancaster, rising:—“ I know he must die.—Forgive, my son, the shadow of pusillanimity; the conflict is over. Ella, look up, sweet girl—companion and solace of my declining years—am I not thy mother ?”

Raymond, as if the word so applied had created a sudden idea—dropped on his knee, exclaiming,

exclaiming—"Be then her mother in earnest, and secure to your son the hand which alone is wanting to complete his happiness."

"Impossible, my Lord!" cried the surprised maid, drawing it from his reluctant heart—"You know not what you ask."

The Countess, in this trying moment, unwilling to withhold any blessing from her departing child, readily adopted the sudden sentiment, and "why impossible, my Ella? *you* cannot surely oppose a hope on which our chance of temporal peace depends. — Remember —."

The Countess would have represented Raymond's danger, but she was unequal to the task, and, after a moment's pause, added her opinion, "that Lord Henry would receive her son with additional pleasure, when considered as the husband of his niece;" but it was with infinite difficulty the diffident
and

and distressed Ella could hear of such a proposal, till overcome more by Lady Lancaster's arguments than her son's passionate and eager petitions, she yielded a trembling reluctant consent, positively insisting, however, that it should be delayed to the last hour of his stay.

To this Raymond thankfully agreed, and, as much to spare the gentle girl's confusion, as to prepare for his departure, he left her to the affectionate attention of his generous mother, who combated her yet remaining objections with that energy, maternal feelings, and a long succession of sorrows, rendered irresistible, completely silencing her doubts respecting her uncle's acquiescence, by an assurance, that neither his pride of birth, or dread of unequal alliance, would on the one hand be fulfilled, or mortified on the other.

Every arrangement being properly concluded, his travelling suite adjusted, and even-

a favourite charger of the late Earl's saddled for his use, Raymond received, at the High Altar of the neighbouring Monastery, his lovely Ella's vows, though in a voice hardly articulate.

The solemnity over, he delivered her to the embraces of his mother, and passing his arms round them both, fervently recommended them to Heaven's protection, and then hurried by the good Father who had joined their hands, and who pitied the distress his delay occasioned, he slowly descended the steps which led from the chapel to the hall, looking back to the seat on which his beloved wife and mother had sunk in speechless agony.

To have returned would have been cruelty, to leave them involved in the bitterness of distress seemed an inexcusable violence offered to love and duty; but while balancing between such contradictory claims, his heart, in this momentous period of Raymond's

mond's life, seemed to acquire a prudent fortitude.—Deeply sighing then, he quitted the Monastery, and mounting his horse that was brought to the gate, rode immediately towards Morpeth, eager to visit his worthy Sir Joselin, who, he doubted not, had long lamented his death as certain.—It was likewise a part of his plan to secure the company of his friend upon this dangerous expedition, as well as the attendance of Edred and Ambrose, all which purposes he happily attained; and, desirous of lessening the parade of so many attendants, he sent back part of the suite his mother, fond of doing honour to her son, had collected together, not without letters filled with the tenderest remembrances to the dear objects of his constant thoughts, hopes, and wishes.

Sir Joselin, delighted to be thus distinguished, and rejoicing to meet his favourite in circumstances so prosperous, joyfully commenced his journey.—while Edred and Ambrose,

brose, who had long mourned the obstinacy of their Lord, in venturing beyond the bounds of safety, jointly informed him that they had seen Ranulph upon the road the very evening after he was seized, and Raymond was no longer at a loss to whom to appropriate his short, though cruel, captivity.

CHAP.

C H A P. VIII.

My care is like my shadow in the sun,
Follows me flying :—Flies when I pursue it,
Stands and lies by me---does what I have done :
This too familiar care does make me rue it.
I am---and am not---freeze, and yet am burn'd ;
Since from myself---my other self is turn'd.

Signed ELIZA Regina.

Ashmole Museum.

THE temporary fortitude, which Ella had assumed to cover the anguish this sudden parting had induced, vanished with the cause that supported it—her cold and death-

death-like cheek fell helplessly against the bosom of her venerable supporter, communicating its chilling properties to the heart of the noble Dame, who shuddered at the sight of her daughter's distress, while she united with the good Superior in his attempt to calm and console the partner of her beloved ; but Ella was no longer in a situation that forbid the modest expression of sanctioned affection—no longer the subject of impetuous and imprudent attachment—connected by the most sacred ties—to the object of a long-concealed preference—at liberty to acknowledge the sentiments of a pure and gentle heart—she suffered her tears to flow unrestrained, and opposed only a mournful silence to the solemn arguments of monastic wisdom.

As she slowly, accompanied by the Father and Lady Lancaster, returned to a house now rendered peculiarly melancholy—by the loss of him whose pleasing society had given to the most gloomy scenes, the gay tint of happiness—

piness — her benevolent mother perceiving their venerable companion's mode of consolation extremely irksome, encouraged Ella, as the morning was bright and frosty, to seek her favourite walk, which was defended from the North-East by a flourishing wall, if it might be called such of noble yews.

Happy to escape the formal monotonist, she thanked the Countess with a grateful tear, and reluctantly leaving her to the tedious repetition of dull apothegms and grave declamations, felt a transient relief in the liberty of reflection, and yet reflection was, as it should seem, improperly calculated for the purpose of comfort—Raymond falling by the sword of assassination, suffering possibly by the strained exertions of a tyrannical tribunal, sinking beneath the weight of cruel fetters, or it might be expiring in one of the horrid dungeons prepared by feudal tyranny, for the punishment of those wretches who were unhappy enough to be obnoxious to the powerful

erful Baron—Raymond, once her dear companion, pointing out every interesting object, which now her sickened imagination turned from in hopeless disgust.—He alone filled every point of view—embittered every consoling idea—and loaded her heart with a weight of new and heavy cares—till Lady Lancaster, after shaking off the holy Andrew, joined her in the garden, and by the effect of maternal remonstrance, and tender participation, insensibly led her gloomy thoughts from death and despair, to higher and happier prospects.

Engaged in the contemplation of great and terrible exploits, the firmer mind of Raymond sunk not under the distress of separation, secure of the affection and fidelity of his Ella, his spirits rose against the oppression which former uncertainty had created, and Sir Joselin viewed, with all the energy of martial delight, the manly form of his young friend, animated by a connected impetuosity, .

petuosity, calm but ardent—resentful, not malicious—graceful, not effeminate—nor was his emotions, as they approached the feat of the murdered Earl William, unnoticed by this warm admirer of De Vallenciennes, whose changing complexion and sudden silence marked his inward anxiety—no wonder, as Raymond had added another motive for the agitation, Ella, the beloved niece of Lord Henry, and right heiress of her father's possessions, was now his wife.—No consent ask'd of this Lord, so tenacious of his birth, and privileges—how would he receive such extraordinary, and perhaps unwelcome, intelligence ?

These doubts were for the present suppressed by an observation of Sir Joselin, respecting the appearance of a vast pile of building, which he dimly discerned upon the edge of the horizon, between which and our travellers lay a dreary and uncultivated tract.

Ambrose

Ambrose now rode forward, and gave his opinion that it was Fitzroy's residence; they then redoubled their speed to reach it before night-fall; but a violent storm of rain had rendered the path, that was already nearly obscured by the advancing night, so slippery, that their horses were every moment in danger of falling; nor was Ambrose's guidance of consequence enough to gain their confidence, as he had never but once passed that road: However, the evil was merely temporary, and too slight even to be called such in Raymond's estimation.

They had now gained the skirts of the extensive Heath, and entered a close lane without exactly knowing to what it led, as the darkness entirely shut out external objects, though Ambrose ventured, in a low tone, to maintain his opinion that he was right, which the distant barking of several dogs appeared to confirm, and spurring his horse, he hazarded his neck to prove his

knowledge.—He had been gone but a few minutes, when the glare of torches encouraged them to hope Ambrose was not mistaken, and the voice of Lord Henry speaking cheerfully as the light advanced, credited the poor fellow's assertion.

Raymond now assured Sir Joselin their journey was nearly concluded, and immediately after was congratulated by his noble friend, who leading the way, presently conducted them to the great hall of a stately edifice through the offices, which extended from the right of it to the entrance of the lane they had just quitted, where Raymond, with his friend, was received with that cordial liberality so generally described, as commonly practised in ancient times.

Lord Henry, sensible they must be fatigued almost beyond bearing, chose not to enter upon the subject of their meeting that evening; but after an early supper insisted they

they should retire to bed.—The ready obedience of his attendants, and the independence of his manner, convinced Raymond he had much to hear :—Disguised and emigrating from his native country—dreading an enemy in every one he met—what must be the wonderful events which had apparently restored his family dignity.—This was an investigation to which Raymond's powers were unequal, and which was necessarily deferred by the arrival of several Knights, who, after some salutary refreshment, expressed the utmost eagerness to continue their journey, which Fitzroy informed De Vallenciennes, pointed towards Nottingham-Castle, and he immediately prepared to accompany them, acquainting our hero at the same time they had entered into compact with himself, not without their noble Monarch's suffrage to revenge upon Mortimer the injuries themselves, and thousands besides, had sustained from the miscreant.

“ You will of course, then, my young friend, add the weight of Despencer’s wrongs to our cause.—Sir Joselin too, I find ranks with us in the noble undertaking.—Come, we have no time to lose :—I burn to engage in the extirpation of that villain.—We must be at Hull by to-morrow night, where I have emissaries who are waiting for us, as I expect, with intelligence from Governor Eland, who has promised his assistance.”

To this harangue Raymond attended in silence.—He had ever held the idea of assassination in abhorrence, which, from the tenor of Fitzroy and the Knight’s discourse, he had reason to apprehend he intended to meet Mortimer upon equal terms, was the plan his noble soul had formed ; but here were too many competitors for the honour of crushing the venom which had poisoned the happiness of many individuals, yet all seemed determined upon the gratification of their revenge.

In

In the hurry attending their departure from the Park, he could find no leisure to communicate his sentiments to Fitzroy, and they arrived at Hull without any explanation. Here they were to separate, which they did with cool and deliberate caution, appointing the next night, save one, for the performance of their purposes.

Raymond and Sir Joselin, however, remained with Lord Henry, and they rode to a little inn near Bingham.—Fitzroy was not altogether satisfied with his young friend, who, he fancied, accepted not, with his usual ardor, the opportunity so fairly put into his hands, and unwilling to suspend, even for a moment, the honourable opinion he had formed of Raymond's principles, candidly discovered his suspicions, as they were crossing an old burying-ground that formerly be-

longed to an Abbey, of which there remained no other vestige.

Sir Joselin knowing the situation of De Vallenciennes, respecting his concealed marriage, accepted not the offer Lord Henry made to pass an hour in rambling about the environs of the village in preference to being confined to endure the noise and hurry of a common alehouse, as he conceived Raymond would take advantage of the silent hour to fathom Fitzroy's sentiments on that head.

"You will excuse," said his Lordship, "the sincerity which urges me to remark a sudden coldness in your reception of the Knights who have joined us in our noble resolution. — If any objection has arisen in your mind to the manner of that arrangement, you will do well to confide it to me; but I expect it will be justifiable and well founded, or it may go nigh to snap the great chain which has connected the links of an enterprise so great and glorious.

Raymond

Raymond hesitated.—There was no mode of acting he could safely propose, which would not militate against the scheme they had formed, and to own the purpose of a soul that disdained even to return in kind the insults he had sworn to avenge, was to hazard that friendship and favour on which so much depended.

“ You do not answer, Raymond.—Is it true, that your courage is not equal to the undertaking ?”

“ Courage, my Lord, has nothing to do in this business ; but I will be candid : Mortimer, though deserving of a thousand stabs, would, in the eyes of the world, obtain some little remission of his crimes, when the manner of his death is considered.—You have agreed it is to be by assassination ; but should a soul, loaded with vices of every description, be deprived of the advantages our church holds out ? and would not such a deed

of violence shift the burthen of his wickedness, in some degree at least, to the shoulders of his assailants ?”

“ What, then,” said Fitzroy, stopping and speaking in a contemptuous accent, “ what then may be your mode of attack ?”

“ That of a fair and public challenge, my Lord.”

“ And do you think, young man, that so many valiant Knights, who thirst for revenge, will put it upon the issue of *your* sword ?”

“ I fear not ; but be that, as it may, I cannot turn assassin.”

“ *Assassin !* take care, Raymond, you know not what you say ; our coadjutors in this undertaking are men of firm, unshaken honour. It appears to me that you are not acquainted with their sentiments ; but,” softening his voice

voice and manner, "I will not cavil at words; the moments are too precious.—You hint at a challenge: Who will countenance your rash impetuosity? Who will even deliver it? Is not Mortimer inaccessible to open means? And will not his death be completed before your *too* refined notions can be gratified? — Besides, let me, to quench the youthful spark of generosity, let me remind you of Edward, your King,"

"And *father*," groaned forth the agitated De Vallenciennes.

"*Father*—what mean you?"

"O, my Lord, he was my *father*—I am his son by—the Countess of Lancaster, Raymond, is it not so?"

"Most assuredly, Lord Henry."

"Then Isabella's suspicions are accounted for, as well as the amazing circumstance I

shall hereafter speak of.—O, Raymond, you have a noble brother ; but how ——.”

“ I guess Lord Fitzroy’s inference, and will readily explain, when I have courage, the wonderful events that have filled the time of our separation : But first say—how can I, consistent with the notions I have imbibed, submit to——‘ stab your *father’s murderer*,’ for so let me supply the pause—and shall I add to the black account that of——but need I add any motive more forcible than that which I have already mentioned, or, if I must—think, Raymond (said he, casting a look over the gloomy cemetery, which spread its uneven surface to the clear beams of a full moon) think that the unsatisfied spirits of Edward, Despen- cer, nay, and the noble Earl William, are now within your eye, reproaching ——.”

“ O doubt not, my Lord, but I thirst for revenge. Surely some means may be found to defy him to the teeth.”

“ Obstinate

“ Obstinate boy !—I have done—but of this be assured, that Ella Fitzroy shall never give her hand to one so fantastically scrupulous :—Besides, do you not reflect upon the King himself—whose signet—yes, your *brother's* signet—countenances, nay, commands the deed ?”

Raymond sighed.

“ Enough, my Lord ; I am conquered.”

“ The exigence of the times forbid an adherence to forms and ceremonies ; for such, my son, are the foundations of your objections, which are very luckily obviated ; and now, if you please, we will go back to our inn, and as it will be unnecessary to go to rest for the few hours which remain of night, we will mutually communicate the events that have brought about such changes in our situation, though I shall have occasion to take up my story at a much earlier period—

‘ and I, thought De Vallenciennes must sink at present the most material circumstance of mine ——.”

When they had reached the house, the landlord, who had staid up to let them in, assured them he had advised the other person to go to bed, as he seemed quite poorly ; but that they would find a large fire, and a flaggon of excellent beer.—His assertion was made good, and, with the addition of some cold meat, they found no reason to complain. The old man retired to Ambrose, whose predilection in favour of the ale made his necessary attendance of no consequence.

Lord Henry now began, with relating the supposed motives for Despencer’s connexion with Mortimer, and the shock he endured when Ella appeared before him at Lambert’s cottage, which he attributed to his recollection of her father’s features, for of her own he had no knowledge, as he had
not

not seen her since she was quite an infant, owing to a misunderstanding between the Earl and him, whose relationship to Despencer had accounted for their intimacy.

“ I do not pretend,” said the Knight, “ to give a reason for Mortimer’s familiar acquaintance with a Minister, whose attachment to his Sovereign naturally forbid such a junction from my own knowledge; but from the confession of your enemy, Ranulph.—Raymond’s attention was increased by the name of Ranulph to a painful degree.”

“ You are doubtless surpris’d at this intelligence, but it will sink to nothing, compared to the wonders I have to disclose. — Perhaps it would be better to take up my story at the period of my meeting Danvers, formerly a confidential servant to my poor brother, who, in the occupation of porter to the Monastery of St. Peter’s, had sunk that of Earl William Fitzroy’s Esquire, and escaped that dreadful

dreadful night from a place polluted with murder. He knew me immediately, and while you were walking in the garden, abruptly entered my chamber, telling me that my brother was living; that not a moment was to be lost, but if I would rise, and walk with him, he would explain these abrupt hints.—My brother living:—O, Raymond, I sickened to know more, and throwing on the clothes he had brought, hastened with him into the marshes.—As soon as we were out of sight by a turn in the road, he began to tell me of his sorrow for the loss of so good a Lord, and the methods he took to escape the murderers, who seemed bent upon the destruction of the whole family, and then went on to say, that in a short time after he ventured to London, though doubtful of his safety, and despairing of being settled so properly as before, submitted to take the office of brewer to Lord Despencer; that this employment occasioning him to be up very late one night, he perceived two men walking

walking slowly before him on a grass walk which led to the house, and which he was obliged to cross in his way from the brew-house to his lodging, that was over a gate at the bottom of the garden, and opened to the river. The first words he caught were,

“ He must either die, or be ——.”

What followed he could not hear ; but the answer, which was in his Lord Despencer’s voice, made him eager to know more, and as he softly crept along behind them, Despencer said, “ he never would consent.”

His companion then used several threatening execrations, “ that he must have money ; that the young heiress was safely disposed ; that her uncle could not put in his claim.” His voice then fell so much as not to be understood, but upon being again contradicted, he raised it high enough to inform Danvers some great advantage was to arise

from the perpetual imprisonment of a person, whose estates, in failure of issue, was to revert to Despencer in right of his late Lady.

To this no reply was made, and the appearance of a third person, whose remarkable figure could not be mistaken for any one but Ranulph, the master of the horse put an end to any more information, and he was obliged to retire without any further satisfaction.

It was then he said in the midst of winter, and nothing relating to this mysterious business came to his knowledge till the following summer, when it was reported through the family, that a person had been brought to the dungeon beneath the house by the young Lord Despencer. He immediately recollected the strange story before related, and was determined, if possible, to find out the unhappy victim; but it was several years before he knew, and then it was by a lucky
3 accident.

accident.—The man appointed to take care of the prisoner died — Ranulph was absent with the young master Raymond, and Danvers were pitched upon to carry the daily allowance.

“ O, my Lord,” said Danvers, “ how my heart beat when I opened the door of the upper dungeon, and beheld your noble brother, who I thought was dead ! I could hardly stand.—My Lord knew me, and seemed as much overcome as myself ; but when he was a little composed told me “ that he should have died of his wounds, if Lord Despencer had not sent a surgeon, who, he supposed, he could trust to a small house, where he was carried, and which belonged to that Nobleman, and that, when he was recovered, Mortimer ordered him to be sent there, where he had lived ever since, upon condition he should make no attempts to escape.

“ This

"This he promised, as some private griefs, he said, made his life of little value, and the supposed death of his brother and daughter, added to his indifference about liberty."

CHAP.

C H A P. IX.

But what my wrongs hereafter, times shall speak ;
Let this suffice—a great revenge I seek.

TASSO.

OVERCOME by a recapitulation of this horrible event, Fitzroy paused to indulge in sad and painful meditation, nor would his sympathizing auditor infringe the solemn silence.—It was a moment marked with deep fraternal sorrow ; but was happily broken in upon by Ambrose, who chose to inform his master day was approaching : Lord Henry, somewhat

somewhat revived by this interruption, mentioned no more of Earl Williams's conversation with Danvers, as it turned upon his Lady, whose conduct his brother chose not, in any degree, to expose, but proceeded to say, — "That the porter acquitted himself so well of the trust reposed in him by Despencer, that while his attention contributed to lessen his beloved Lord's inconveniences, it did not offend Despencer."

The flight of that unhappy Minister made no alteration in Earl Williams's affairs.—He was still a prisoner, and Danvers continued to attend him.—Infirm, and almost helpless from long confinement, the faithful creature ventured, in Ranulph's absence, to support my poor brother into the garden, and was pleased to remark the effect the fresh air had upon his spirits.—He had done this for several weeks occasionally, and upon the very day on which you arrived at Spencer-House. He had been indulged as usual, though with
the

the utmost caution, as his going into the garden was a secret to all the servants, but Danvers, who took care to watch the opportunity of their being severally employed; but the unexpected return of Ranulph only gave my brother time to enter his dungeon by a private door which opened to some back stairs, and which Danvers could not follow him to fasten.

“ Then,” interrupted Raymond, “ to that noble sufferer I was indebted for the friendly warning.”

“ It must be so, Raymond, for I had spoke to the Earl upon your affairs, as every one about the house foretold your misfortune.”

“ My Lord,” said De Vallenciennes, grasping Fitzroy’s hand, “ put it in my power to return the intended obligation conferred upon

upon me at the hazard of Earl Williams' valuable life."

"I trust," replied his friend, with a melancholy smile, "means will not be wanting to evince your gratitude; but I have yet much to say, and much to hear from you."

"The liberty my brother had enjoyed through Danvers's means, was entirely prohibited by that poor man being discharged in a manner that convinced him some farther evil was intended to the dear captive, who, before his kind friend's departure, was confined more strictly than ever, and Danvers finding he could be of no farther use to his Lord, quitted London, and travelled to St. Peter's, where he recollected a brother of his was lately engaged as servitor, through whose persuasion he engaged as porter."

"Now, then, my Lord," said he, "judge if your presence is not required at Spencer-House."

Houfe.—I could hardly hear him out ; my impatience became excessive — Danvers seemed pleased at my eagerness, and we finally agreed to make directly for the capital.—You will excuse the seeming neglect of your concerns ; but a brother's life—what could be put in competition with it ?—To return, must make an unavoidable delay. — Danvers was delighted, and cheerfully accompanied me to London, which we reached in about four days.”

“ Fatigued—dirty—unattended—and any title unannounced, I had a hopeless prospect of obtaining an audience of the King, whose sanction and assistance were absolutely necessary to the design I had formed ; but the day of our arrival proved to be the anniversary of Phillipa's birth, and the Royal Family dined in Rutlie, which gave me an opportunity of presenting a memorial to Edward as he passed along the platform, which was raised for his accommodation through the Strand

Strand to the city, where the August Pair were to dine."

" Let me stop a moment to congratulate you upon the noble manners, excellent principles, and martial spirit of your brother—his dignified familiarity so properly checked by a just sense of his exalted situation—and the sweetness of his disposition—it was with difficulty I could get near enough to the platform; nor should I have succeeded, if one of the guards, more civil than the rest, had not stood aside while I delivered my papers."

" Edward fixed his penetrating eyes upon my countenance as he received them, and bid me be at the Palace on the following morning.—I bowed with reverence, and was pleased with this reception so much beyond expectation.—The walls that shut in Spencer-House from the street were in view.—I was eager to inquire; but it would have been dangerous,

dangerous, and most surely the hours which intervened between that time and the appointed interview were the most tedious I had ever known; but the wished-for morning arrived, and while I was particularizing the various misfortunes of our unhappy family, the young Monarch evinced the interest he took in our affairs by the most serious and ardent attention; but when to them I added the strange circumstances which connected *your* interest with mine—he absolutely started at your name. — The colouring, of what I imagined to be resentment, deepened on his cheek.—I hesitated.

“ Raymond De Vallenciennes,” he repeated, “ the same I think, who was so much indebted to Lord Despencer.”

“ The same, my gracious Lord.”—His eye now fell beneath my respectful gaze; but when he raised it—Raymond—I beheld a tear.

This was no indication of *resentment*. — Something like grief and shame appeared to mix their effects upon the most interesting countenance I ever saw."

Raymond's features at that moment contradicted the assertion, forming a combination of every passion this important information could excite.

"Edward now," continued Lord Henry, "ask'd me if I knew the origin of my friend? I answered in the negative."

"Isabella," said he, and his countenance changed—"Isabella"—for he would not say mother—"would fain have impressed upon my youthful mind the most dishonourable suspicions respecting that young man's birth; but a collection of letters, which were lately put into my hands by the present possessor of Spencer-House, renders any farther doubts unnecessary; nor do I wonder at Raymond's eagerness (as it has been represented to me)
to

to get the valuable testimonials into his hands."

"The very letters, my friend, which you so unluckily missed in your last attempts to recover them."

De Vallenciennes lifted up his hands in silent vexation—but would not interrupt his respectable informer, who went on to say,

"That the King, after owning his surprise at the intelligence, determined, should fate ever put it in his power, to lessen, as much as he could, the disgrace which had involved an innocent man's connexions—that the moment was now arrived, and should not pass without his endeavours to realize his intentions: He then observed, that, as Ranulph had doubtless read those papers, which he discovered by the means of an unclosed panel in the wainscot where they were secreted it occurred to him, that some being, superior

in malice, had directed the man to communicate them to him; but though they had shocked his feelings by fixing a stigma on his father's memory, it had removed it from the guiltless De Vallenciennes, whose welfare he strenuously committed to my care, and positively engaged to consider it as his own, when the commotions, which even now raged internally, should, by some laudable acts of severity, be subsided.—He then drew from his finger this valuable gem, which he sent to my friend as a pledge of his future intentions.

“Virtuous brother—generous man—born to retrieve the glories of this suffering kingdom!”

“Yes,” whispered Raymond to his throbbing heart, “I thank thee for this liberal acknowledgement.” Then turning to Fitzroy—“Go on, my noble protector, and ———.

“ I

“ I have little more to say on this subject, Raymond, for it would be unnecessary to dwell upon the facility with which Edward entered into my measures, or the satisfaction with which he acknowledged me.—A guard was ordered, and my burning impatience soon gratified, by seeing Ranulph under their care. I then flew to the dungeon — Raymond—there was no one there.—I turned to the wretch who I had commanded to attend :

“ Villain,” said I, “ where is my brother? He appeared not to understand me.—My brother—I repeated—Earl William Fitzroy. Is he sacrificed to Mortimer’s detestable principles? — I then saw his countenance change from the flush of anger to the deadly hue of fear ;—but he continued silent—when one of the servants, who, unmolested by the guard, had accompanied us to the dungeon, cried,

H 3

“ If

“ If you mean the prisoner, who has been here so long—he is dead:—I attended him in his last moments.”

“ Dead !” I exclaimed ; “ of what complaint ?”

“ Of grief, my Lord, I fancy.”

“ Are you *sure* it was (however dreadful) are you *sure* (said I) it was the *only* cause ?”

The fellow hesitated, and Ranulph, who seemed to derive courage from his danger, then spoke—telling me, “ whatever had been done was by Mortimer’s orders, which, if I would grant him a private audience, he would fully explain. Danvers then coming forward, I appointed him to attend the criminal, and as I was about to quit the dreadful scene of a brother’s sufferings, which I looked round upon with increasing agitation, my eye rested upon a part of the wall, covered with characters

acters nearly illegible; but I could trace the well-known hand, and with difficulty made out a portion of the poor martyr's employment, which was that of sketching here and there his melancholy reflections with what appeared to be a piece of burnt charcoal sharpened to a point.

In one place I read:—" Jan. 27, 1729.—
" O night of tenfold anguish! deep'ning by
" this awful gloom—the tormenting horrors
" of a distracted mind, and increasing the
" pains of a wounded body.
" Yes—last night was indeed an era in my
" fate—replete with terror—for, as the last
" gleam of an expiring lamp quivered upon
" these bare damp walls, I fancied
" But was it fancy?—Did not the crimson
" torrent really stream from the infant bosom,
" as she mournfully pointed to the
" wound made by that relentless murderer's
" sword?

“ My child !—my Ella !—Six
 “ tedious months have past since the sweetest
 “ bloom of nature sunk beneath
 “ O torture !—My wife too !—Madness—
 “ ——Madness !”

In another part he seemed to refer to the relief his faithful servant afforded ; but I could only make out these words :

“ My misery is lightened—O thou most dear to this solitary soul !”

It is likely he was fearful of writing more explicitly on that head ; but I had read enough to sharpen, if it were possible, the poignancy of sorrow, and turning to my sympathizing companion, we entered a small room, where I prepared for an account, the preface to which had shaken my soul with horror.

Ranulph

Ranulph began with the arts used by Mortimer, to induce Despencer to imprison my brother and his whole family, which was for some time steadily refused; but the eagerness of young Hugh to get possession of the estates Mortimer proposed to confiscate, under the pretence that they of right belonged to that family, overcame his fond father, and another cause operating with Mortimer, induced him, if possible, not only to contrive my brother's death, but the extinction of his family. This he openly attempted; but the elder Despencer interposing Earl William's sentence was softened to perpetual imprisonment, and the odium of all was artfully thrown upon Despencer—an odium which Mortimer's increasing power obliged him to endure.

He then, in a fainter tone, as though dreading the consequence of what he had yet to disclose—mentioned Mortimer's resolution of making use of the nation's resentment as

a plea for the Minister's destruction, whose escape from London was attributed to his favourite De Vallenciennes, and this determined him, if possible, to destroy one who had given him so much trouble.

Raymond sighed out a smothered execution against the contriver of so much evil, while his heart swelled with gratitude to the Omniscient Author of his preservation.

"It was with difficulty," continued Lord Henry, "that I suffered the precious miscreant to proceed; but as it was only through that corrupted channel I could draw the secrets of his diabolical master, I governed my justifiable rage, and permitted him to go on: But what will my dear niece suffer, when she is told, that to her preservation is owing the sacrifice of her beloved parent? for I presently discovered that Ranulph, who had too successfully employed *his* emissaries—after tracing you to Lambert's cottage, soon knew
it

it to be Ella's abode—a secret he had drawn from a simple fellow, who had accompanied her part of the way thither, and whom he had accidentally seen at Berkley-Castle, where the young man had been to a relation of his with a particular message ; but he could not know whose daughter she was.”

“ That secret, my Lord,” said Ranulph, “ was betrayed by Lord Raymond, while he was at Spencer-House.”

De Vallenciennes started :

“ Me, my Lord ! I knew it not myself, and if I had ——.”

“ Softly, my friend, wonderful as this may appear, it is a fact, and thus he explained, in the second visit you made at Spencer-House—you dropped a letter in the anti-chamber, which Ranulph eagerly opening, found to contain the amazing ——.”

H 6

“ Im-

“Impossible, Lord Henry!—*That* I unfortunately lost Lord Berkley’s. — I know your objection, Raymond, and thus I obviate it. He then put the identical letter into his young friend’s hands, which Ranulph had restored—and, to his utter astonishment, De Vallenciennes observed the important secret written by Lady Lancaster on a small slip of paper, as added by that Lady when Berkley left it for her perusal, and which fastened to the inner cover, had escaped Raymond’s notice.”

Lord Henry observing his extreme agitation, hastened to close Ranulph’s confession, saying, “that, in consequence of Mortimer’s being informed of the Earl’s daughter being living, he determined the death of his unhappy prisoner, which had taken place but the week before, and was effected by poison; and that in his last moments, during a sensible interval, he mentioned *you*, and fervently
prayed

prayed that the warning he had been enabled to give was obeyed.

“ Blessed martyr !” said De Vallenciennes, “ and did you attempt the liberation of one, who doubtless has accelerated your destruction ? Was the fate of a stranger capable of exciting such benevolence in a bosom, throbbing it might be at that moment with apprehensions of a most fearful nature ? It was then the voice of the noble Fitzroy that struck me with such terror at the moment, when every idea of danger appeared ridiculous.

“ O, Lord Henry ! have *I* contended for a *fair* opportunity of meeting Mortimer by challenge—inhuman monster ! — Is there a mortification, or punishment, adequate to his crimes ?—No, let him be assassinated : Now—this moment—let us hasten to Nottingham.—See the day—and must we wait till night.—Pardon me, Lord Fitzroy, for
fo

so obstinately opposing your will: — And *thou*, fainted spirit of my Royal Father—forgive me for requiring a more forcible inducement to so just a revenge.—He then, thoughtless of the relation he had promised to give of his own adventures—left the room—summoned Sir Joselin and his servants, and, unopposed by Lord Fitzroy, who gloried in his ardour, hurried the preparation for their departure.”

CHAP.

C H A P. X.

Methinks each step I take some fiend,
With hideous jaws, stands ready to devour me.
I quake, as if the pangs of death had seized me :
But peace and I are now for ever parted,
And horror grows each moment more familiar.

OWEN.

WHILE the heart of every conspirator
was beating with the hope of success,
Mortimer was passing the tedious day in agitation,
yet more painfully intense, secured
by

by a strong guard, and full dependance upon the Governor of the Castle, he felt little anxiety for his personal safety, nor doubted, when the ferment his conduct had excited was allayed, he should yet triumph over his enemies.—It is true, there were moments in which his torments were superior to every evil short of an eternity ; but though sleep, assisted too by opiates, could scarcely procure an hour's oblivion ; yet the destruction he had brought upon his fellow creatures, occasioned less horror than the meditation of an intended crime—a crime which Ranulph had engaged to commit ; but as the confinement he now submitted to from prudential motives, prevented his hearing what passed in the metropolis, he could only suppose some obstacle had retarded, without destroying the means : It was not that his thirst for blood had been unsatisfied ;—he had been heard even to wish the *stupid* Edward had died in a natural way ; but the estates so illegally enjoyed, he was sorrowfully convinced had yet

yet an heir, and that heir was *Ella*, the former object of his impure desires, as from a clause in the writings it descended in the female line, consequently Lord Henry was excluded from that part of his brother's possessions, and this knowledge was sufficient to change the course of his intention, and hatred succeeded.—To Ranulph then he deputed the office of bringing her from Lambert's, or what would yet more conduce to his temporary advantage to destroy her privately, and it was probable, had Lord Henry's resentment permitted a farther hearing, Ranulph would have added the dreadful intelligence at that moment in the fullest manner to his confession; but he had murdered a noble brother, and Fitzroy, unable to hear more, resigned him to vindictive public justice.

Thus then was Mortimer tormented with the uncertainty of an innocent creature's fate, who stood between him and fortune.—True,
he

he had long held that fate in doubtful balance; but to one, who could so easily get over every impediment, honour, conscience, or even the claims of humanity, could offer, small were those that presented themselves in her favour, and he determined, by the extinction of both father and child, to remove every obstacle; for of Lord Henry he could not be afraid, since that Nobleman's long silence induced him to hope the grave had caused it.

Wild then with anxiety he sought to divert it by change of place, and being more than usually disturbed, wasted part of this awful day in traversing the galleries, listening to every voice or footstep that echoed along the lofty walls below, sometimes examining from the battlements the roads which led to the Castle, vainly expecting the arrival of his horrid emissary, or some one deputed by him, and as the sun brightly declined, he was ready to curse the beams which only light him to disappointment.

While

While he was thus engaged, the Queen, with whom he had kept no measures for some time, and whose presence he detested, opened a window, before which he was uneasily pacing, and in a gentle accent entreated him to stop ; but Mortimer immediately quitted the battlement opposite where she stood, and entered his chamber.—It was now twilight. His fire had been neglected, and the dying embers faintly flushed in the chimney—alone, wretched—wishing—yet dreading the farther accumulation of his terrible crimes—*who* in that moment would have been *Mortimer* ? It was a moment tremendous even to him — before his disturbed imagination flitted the forms of those he had murdered :—Conscience would no longer be silent—courage, such as Mortimer possessed, was of no avail. A sudden shaking of the casement, followed by a shrill, melancholy scream, entirely conquered it—or the visit of a night owl, which flapp'd her wings against the casement, uttering the usual forboding note, would have been

been discovered.—Cold sweats ran from his brow.—He looked towards the window, and the alarm was repeated.—The light was now nearly extinct. — He turned his trembling steps to the door which he had just reached, when a heavy groan added to his terror, and he reeled into an elbow chair.

Strong sobbings now broke from his bosom, and that repentance, which argues a want of power to do it, began to operate. — Another groan interrupted his dreadful meditations. He could not stir—but fixed his eye upon the door from whence the noise proceeded:

“ It is,” whispered enfeebled suspicion,
“ It is Fitzroy—or Edward—perchance the innocent Ella.”

Thus he sat till the room was completely darkened, expecting, without the power of flying, a repetition of the groans; but finding every thing once more silent, he ventured
to

to open the door, when a figure rushing in, by its velocity drove him back—the door closed with violence—and the words—“Death and destruction” fell from its mouth.

Convinced by its manner that this was a corporeal substance, he ventured to raise it from the floor where it had fallen, and the voice of Isabella relieved his fears, though it restored not his peace.

It was no longer inflated with pride — hoarsened by anger, or convulsed through jealousy.—Sorrow and despair had softened its tones, while, with flowing tears, she entreated a moment's hearing.—Could he refuse? Was she not once the Queen of his affection—the source from which he derived all that misused power and undeserved splendour, so useless and unprofitable in this dreary hour of retrospection? Besides, did not her first words indicate something terrible? Placing her then upon a chair, he went
into

into the gallery, and happily met a female attendant of the Queen's, who had heard her groan, and was hastening to her assistance.

When he returned, Isabella would have spoken ; but she could only wave her hand, and sunk into her usual hysterical complaint. Lady Duval then informed Mortimer that she believed her Highness's distress arose from a dream.

The poor woman at this word pointed eagerly to the door, the window, and to Mortimer.—Shocked at this incoherent behaviour, he conveyed her into the next apartment, and somewhat recovered from his own fearful situation, retired to summon her servants, as well as to reprimand the negligence of the Governor, who had suffered him to be so long unattended. The rest of the evening passed without farther alarms, and wearied by the agonies of his
tortured

tortured mind, the guilty Mortimer took his usual portion of opiate, and retired to his chamber.

Here his wretched reflections were again renewed, and at last overcome by the force of medicine, he dropped into an unquiet heavy doze, the common consequence of such narcotics.

With a heart burning to revenge his father's death, his mother's dishonour, and his own injuries, the noble Edward waited in a state of impatient anxiety for the moment of retribution ; for though the criminal weakness of the one, and the horrible demise of the other, could never be erased from his memory, yet some consolation might be derived from the certainty that the primary author of all this mischief could, in no fresh instances, wound his peace, or sully the dignity of his name. To the generosity of his spirit, and the feelings of a great and sensible heart,

heart, might be added an inflexibility, which a little tarnished the lustre of this exalted character—once determined upon any point authorized by reason—prudence, and his own sense of propriety, it required an intervention extremely superior to any thing ever yet offered to turn or supersede the course of his intention.

The dreadful familiarity he had noticed while a child between Mortimer and his mother, disgusted him even at that early period, and though continually in the habit of hearing the Royal Edward degraded and abused by those who owed him duty as a wife, and allegiance as a subject—the powers of discrimination, which were daily expanding, soon exhibited the guilty pair in colours, which all their art could not deface: — What then must be the agonies of his spirit when, to the suspicions which were daily strengthening in his tender mind, was added the most terrible confirmation? and though
his

his Royal Parent's murder opened, (or, according to some historians followed) his accession to the Crown, supported as it was by the strenuous exertions of his mother, it shut not his eyes to her culpability; nor could he look patiently upon the power of her detestable paramour, whom he now more than suspected to be the base investigator of that infernal deed. Thus thinking, was it in nature, at least in the nature of a son so noble, to submit quietly to a state of infamy—to be considered among the neighbouring states as one whose youth and imbecility prevented a full and proper investigation of the diabolical crimes which poisoned the tranquillity of his existence.

“What,” said he to the amiable Philippa, whom he had married in the very bloom of life, “shall the Monarch of a great and glorious nation, who meditates nothing less than the conquest of France, shall the descendant of the victorious Edward the First, whose

name was terrible even to the kingdoms of the East—shall *I* submit to a wretch whose crimes have sullied the name, and shook the peace of England? Philippa it must not be; I will drive the monster from his hiding-place, and assert the honour of a King.—Yes, O my father! I could not prevent thy death, but I *will* avenge it.

In silent admiration of the husband she idolized Philippa, attended to the effusions of his disturbed mind, nor felt ungratified in the hope of seeing the unmaternal Queen Regent deprived of the authority she had so wretchedly abused.

“ In a short time after this conference Edward arrived at Nottingham, disguised as a Knight, and attended only by one Nobleman, with inexpressible indignation he beheld the pomp and retinue of Mortimer apparently more splendid than he himself had ever effected. The gates of the Castle were guarded
by

by numerous centinels, who, when he cautiously demanded admittance as a stranger, desirous to see that stately edifice, rudely repulsed him ; but not till his eye had caught a glimpse of several servitors, and officers peculiar only to Royalty itself.

It is not to be supposed Edward meant any thing more by this attempt than merely to judge of the possibility of the scheme his coadjutors had formed :—Unwilling then to hazard the discovery of any part of their plan, he quitted the court, and pensively descended along the base of a wall, from the bottom of which a path led to the fields.—Here he wandered, perplexed, and doubtful of the success of the enterprise on which he rested as upon the hope of recovered glory and future peace—when turning about to contemplate, the noble and uniform building which arose in perfect grandeur before him, he perceived a figure upon the battlements that faced the grand avenue to the Castle.—

Its hasty and perturbed step announced the greatest anxiety, and while Edward gazed in the hope of its being the Governor, whom he wished to see, the figure advanced to the corner next the side opposite which he stood, and discovered the horrid cause of all his various miseries.

Disgusted, shocked, and almost apprehensive of being seen, he turned from the Castle, and hastened along the glen, through which he observed several people riding hastily towards him. They came in a contrary direction to the battlement where Mortimer stood, and as the road descended towards the left, were soon out of sight of the Castle, a lofty row of elms lining that side of the road on which they now entered.

Edward paused, uncertain whether to suffer them to pass, or depending upon his disguise to wait till they came up; but while he stood
irresolute,

irresolute, the whole party suddenly rode off towards the town, and prevented the possibility of his meeting them for the present.

C H A P. XI.

The arm that is stretched over him he can neither see nor resist.—On every side he dreads it, and on every object which surrounds him he looks with terror, because he is conscious that every object can be employed against him as an instrument of wrath.

BLAIR.

THOUGH Edward possessed all that courage, spirit and tranquillity, which distinguished his warlike grandfather when on the eve of a very important event, yet was there something attached to his present situation

ation so inimical to any occurrence which had drawn forth the exercise of his predecessor's noble qualities, that it seemed to require a yet fuller display of them in him. — Sincerity and candour were leading traits in his character.—The disguise he appeared in was a tacit contradiction to them : It was his pride to look, speak, and act like a King ; but an internal something reproached him as forfeiting his claims to those prerogatives, and he was once upon the point of returning to collect an army, and attack the traitor openly, and agreeably to his sense of the injuries he had received ; but his *word* sacredly given to assist his friends—could *that* be retracted ? Were they not now, even as he supposed, collected at the place of assignation, waiting only for *him* to crown their enterprise, Sir William Eland, the Governor, too, doubtless had laid *his* plan ? Should he now go back ? Would they not accuse him of duplicity ? And then again, what right had he to hazard the safety of his soldiers, many of

whom, as well as his people, might fall in an open assault, as in such a case, if Mortimer *had* any favourites, would immediately stand forward.

Thus involved in disagreeable cogitations and momentary suspense, Edward departed from this general habit of inflexible determination; but the powerful impulse soon returned, and he felt almost ashamed of the temporary deviation.

To the warlike Leicester, whom the King had chosen as a prudent and watchful friend to attend him in the hazardous business, he communicated his wish to accelerate the affair—Leicester had, as has been observed, been extremely active in crushing the King's favourites; but his unalterable attachment to the heir of that unhappy Monarch secured to Edward his fullest confidence, and fearful of his safety, the intrepid Nobleman solicited the honour of sharing the danger of his King,
equally

equally from his public employments, subject to discovery, he chose the habit of an Esquire, and equally with his Royal Master aimed to revenge his insulted dignity.

They had now reached a path which led to Northampton, when a gallant stranger approaching, they soon recognized Sir William Eland, who, when they made themselves known, respectfully informed his Highness, that the Barons and Knights were arrived, and impatiently expected his orders. Edward now understood the party he had seen to be the friends he came to meet, and felt rather vexed at missing them, lest it might for one moment retard the execution of their plan: However, the Governor assured him there was sufficient time remaining, for the arrangement of every thing relative to the purpose.

It was now scarcely seven o'clock, and the hour fixed upon was twelve, when Eland was

to conduct them secretly to an entrance known only to himself, as it had been for many years hidden by rubbish, and he had accidentally discovered it by a gleam of light darting between the wall, near the foundation upon a gloomy passage, through which he occasionally passed to several vaults, containing such stores as could not be injured by damp. — To a place always conceived to be totally dark, it was necessary to carry torches ; but the servant happening one day to strike his foot against a loose stone, threw down the light, and Sir William immediately perceived the narrow chasm : Though at that period no idea presented of its ever being of consequence, he chose not to proclaim the discovery ; but removing at his leisure the stones that were heaped up on the outside, observed the top of a low gothic entrance, the bottom part of which, with two or three broken steps, was yet covered with the loose rubbish. — In this state, after replacing as much of the stuff as would hide the entrance,

trance, he left it, nor thought of it again till the Royal Commands were privately issued for opening the gates to the conspirators; but this being utterly impossible, as Mortimer constantly had the keys of the Castle carried to his bedchamber, Eland, after some consideration, recollected the hidden entrance, and found that, in about half an hour, every impediment might be removed—Happy to find a difficulty so essential completely obviated, he entered heartily into their scheme, and that very afternoon had explained the manner of their intended assault to Lord Henry, in consequence of which he was now returning, by a private path, to prepare for their reception.

From this description Edward eagerly desired to view the place, and Sir William easily conveyed him to the spot, when, after particularizing its internal, as well as external, situation, he hastened to the Castle,

almost fearful of being missed by the watchful and suspicious Mortimer.

Night now closed in very fast, and the King and Leicester, unwilling to keep their friends longer in suspense, soon arrived at the house in which they were assembled. — Edward, who was dutifully, as well as affectionately, received by the whole party, soon fixed his eye upon the more particular companion of Lord Henry, who shrunk somewhat abashed from the awful and scrutinizing gaze ; but the King, who was equally above the extortion of mean servility, and the adventitious requirements of birth alone, step'd forward, and holding out his hand,

“ Raymond De Vallenciennes, as I think.”

“ The same, my Lord,” replied Raymond, bowing low, and receiving the generous pledge with a graceful humility, while his whole countenance was suffused with a
deep

deep blush, Edward read the struggles of his great heart in every feature, and embracing him with a freedom which delighted Lord Henry, softly articulated,

“ My brother—son of a dear and murdered parent!—less reason hast *thou* to blush for thy origin than *I* have.—My heart tells me thou art valiant.—Raymond, I acknowledge thee as Edward’s equal :—Come, let us revenge a father’s death.”

He then quitted the silent youth, who lifted his hands in speechless rapture, and immediately began the arrangement of their business. — This was soon concluded, and after an hour passed in moderate refreshment they left the house, and had scarcely reached the foot of the little eminence on which the Castle stood, when the clock struck twelve.

Here they rested a moment, fearful of advancing, as several lights appeared within the

the windows plainly proving the necessity of stopping till all was silent.—In a short time they all disappeared but two, one of which glimmered from a small casement above the battlement, from whence Edward was alarmed by a succession of groans.—He shuddered.—
——The voice struck upon his heart.

“It is my mother’s,” he cried, “wretched woman! and as he gave a last look at the window, a tear would mark his filial, but abused, affection; when hastily turning away, he led his friends to the private entrance, where Eland was waiting with ardent impatience, and hastily answering their signal, encouraged them to remove the outward obstructions.—This was soon completed, and with quick, but weary steps, they ascended to the hall.—Here Eland bid them wait till all was quiet, for they could again hear the lamentable means which had been appropriated by the King to his unhappy mother, and in an interval of silence he conducted them

them to the door of the gallery, which they were obliged to force from the hinges.—Mortimer, as we before remarked, was fallen into a deep and restless sleep, though it was some time ere the opiate could produce a cessation of thought ; but before the effects were worn off, a violent noise in the gallery disturbed, without completely awakening, the unhappy man, and with a wild and haggard look, he contemplated the faces of several people who appeared on each side the bed ; but that of Lord Henry, animated with rage while he held back the arm of one whose uplifted sword seemed to threaten the wretched Mortimer with immediate destruction (by which it appeared he had changed the intended mode of his destruction) roused him from his stupor, and he attempted something like a plea for pardon.”

“ Pardon !” exclaimed Raymond, unable to contain *his* fury at a sight so hateful —
“ Pardon for a Regicide !—an inhuman, remorseless

morfeless villain! — Pronounce his doom, Lord Henry, or else retard not my juft revenge—Lord Henry, Earl Fitzroy's brother, and, as he fupposed, the *murdered* Ella's uncle.—Nay, then, thought Mortimer, all is over.—The doom Raymond referred to was then explained by the King he had fo much abused, who advancing towards him, ftruck additional terror to his guilty foul—undifturbed by paffion—calm—refolute—equally a ftranger to the weak feelings of unjuftifiable compaffion, or the power of ill-grounded revenge.—In him Mortimer faw the deftruction of every hope—the bar to any expectation of pity—with an air majeftic and collected he fixed an eye of feverity upon the culprit's face, and in answer to his reiterated plea for pardon, Edward fternly replied,

“ Yes, fuch pardon as the Royal Edward's murderer may hope for,”——and then left him to the Knights, by whom he was thought unworthy the fword of true courage.—The
 foldiers

Soldiers were summoned to guard him till day-light in a small room upon the ground-floor of the Castle, from whence he was taken to a place called Elmes, near London, where this dreadful example of unchecked vice was exposed upon a common gibbet: But the Queen, whose entreaties from the next chamber to her fair cousin, as she stiled her son, who she rightly judged was one of the conspirators, was so far considered, as to be allowed the usual attendants, till Edward's pleasure respecting her should be known."

It is necessary to remark, that Mortimer, as the soldiers were roughly dragging him from his apartment to prison, turned a diabolical look upon Lord Henry, who, with Raymond, followed closely to see his orders obeyed, and uttering between his shut teeth a horrid execration bid him not triumph in *his* downfall, whose revenge would survive himself.

It

It was a strange remark, and struck De Vallenciennes with terror.

“Revenge, murderer!” De Vallenciennes exclaimed, “hast thou not had enough of that?”

“Proud boy! Let Ella Fitzroy answer the saucy question,” retorted Mortimer.

A presentiment of some horrid mischief awaiting his beloved niece, struck the Earl with inconsiderable dread, for *he* recollected Ranulph had obscurely hinted at some danger threatening a part of his family, which striking him as a mere pretence calculated to gain a respite, obtained not his notice, nor would he suffer the criminal to proceed.—In vain himself and Raymond attempted, by every possible means, to get the shocking insinuation explained.—Mortimer was silent to every question, whether mildly or insultingly proposed, and smiled maliciously, while he enjoyed the power of teasing his persecutors.

The

The awful business being thus happily completed, which had drawn together so many gallant Knights, Lord Fitzroy, and his impatient friend, took a hasty leave, under the sad impression of impending evil, and Raymond determined to delay his audience with the King (which he meant to have solicited) at least till his return from the North, already had his noble companion rejoiced in his description of Lady Lancaster's reception of her son; nor was he less delighted to hear she had so affectionately acknowledged his niece; but while De Valenciennes hesitated upon the method most eligible for owning his marriage—Lord Henry generously encouraged him to make the important discovery, by frankly confessing it would be his pride and pleasure to see them united.

Thus reassured, with a downcast eye, he ventured to solicit that Nobleman's pardon for the Countess, Ella and himself, who had presumed

presumed to put it out of his Lordship's power to refuse his consent.

Lord Henry paused a moment.—He had rather wished to have surprised them with his concurrence—but it was impossible to be displeased, and with evident pleasure he congratulated his nephew upon the accomplishment of his desires As this eclairsissement had taken place prior to Mortimer's dreadful hint, Raymond scrupled not to express his anxiety to depart, and Fitzroy, after readily adopting his wishes, promised to follow, as soon as he had waited upon the King, with an account of their success——.

With heart-fickening doubt, and fearful expectation, De Vallenciennes felt how very possible it was for the shaft of retaliation to recoil from the envenomed bosom upon the hand that sent it.—In the very act of a just vengeance, he had received a wound which poisoned the sweets of an honourable revenge.

It

It was a random stroke, chiefly intended for his noble coadjutor, and in character from the vile inflictor, who, while he decidedly affirmed (though in ambiguous terms) the destruction of a beloved and innocent creature, felt a something between fear and despair of its reality—that Ella, who had been left under the sacred protection of an admiring friend, guarded by her household, and defended by the neighbourhood of St. Peter's, which upon the least alarm could be of evident use, both by the number of its inhabitants, and the signal bell well known to the surrounding country—that she, who it was presumed would scarcely venture beyond the boundaries of the garden, should, in that little interval, have fallen a prey to the artifices of a villain, was almost incredible;—that she was safe at the moment of Ranulph's insinuations to Fitzroy, Raymond was happily assured; but Ranulph had his emissaries, who, acquainted with her arrival at Lancaster-House, and the society she was then safely rejoicing

rejoicing in, might wait till *his* absence rendered the plan of taking her from thence more feasible.—Thus, during a tedious and dangerous journey, made yet more so by the waters, which, previous to a severe frost, had flooded the low lands, did he embitter the moments of separation, unmindful of Sir Joselin's sensible and ardent expostulation, his faithful Edred's more humble mode of reasoning, or the simple, honest, yet sometimes blunt, observations of his servant Ambrose.

CHAP.

C H A P. XII.

We have, 'tis true—we have been wretched long—
By fortune cross'd—e'en in the hour of bliss;
But now her blessings in their turn succeeds,
With this kind meeting she compensates all.

BECKENHAM.

DEFYING every difficulty, and regardless of the hazards which often shook the courage of his companions, De Vallenciennes safely arrived at a little village within seven miles of Lady Lancaster's.—To his questions, relating to the situation of that

Lady's family, the host of the King Alfred's-Head, where he stopped, could give no satisfaction, nor did he seem able to decide upon any thing but the strength of his ale, or the goodness of his provisions.—Sir Joselin then ventured to propose resting there till the morning, as it was then near the turn of the night, and the moon so obscured by a heavy fall of snow, as to render the road, which led from the village over a dismal Moor, absolutely perilous ; but his young friend's mind, too much obstructed by the perplexity of his ideas, could not advert to bodily fatigues or perils.

The landlord, who conceived some recompense was due to the cheerfulness with which he had quitted a warm bed to attend his guest, now started a motive for their stay, which was, in his opinion, absolutely irresistible, and which he chose to omit when interrogated about the Countess.

This

This was nothing less than his humble opinion, that there was no room for visitors at Lancaster-House; for that a few days before a number of men had stopped at his inn on their way thither, and two of them detained by the goodness of his ale had staid behind for another jug; that they were in a great hurry to overtake the rest, and he supposed for his part

“ Were they disguised? Were they armed? Did he hear *who* they were—or upon what business they went?” asked Raymond, in visible agony.

“ O! as to that, they might be disguised for what he knew, for they seemed to be after no good, and one of them hoped his master would not miss the Lady.”

“ Enough, enough,” said the unhappy young man, as he gave his horse the reins, and before the others could follow he had

entered upon the Moor, fearless of every thing but Ella's safety.—The snow now fell so fast, as perfectly to obliterate the track he should have kept, and forcing his horse, with an eager impatience, through the drifts that rose on every side, the poor animal suddenly lost his footing, and in plunging, threw his master with considerable violence, then disengaging himself from the snow which, in that hollow way, lay extremely deep, he galloped back again towards the village.

Raymond, more vexed than hurt by this unlucky accident, soon recovered his feet, and wandered about till day-light, distressed to a degree of anguish. The snow had abated, and fell mixed with a sharp sleet; but now, to make amends for the sufferings he had endured, De Vallenciennes beheld the vanes of St. Peter, and soon after Lancaster-House rise amidst the gloom; though a few minutes before the fatigue he suffered enervated those hopes, fears and wishes, that had
defied

defied such variety of personal inconveniences, they now arose beyond the power of controul ; but the inequalities of the way, which often obliged him to quit what he fancied to be a ready path, retarded his steps so much, that it was near the hour of his mother's rising before he gained the road that bounded a side front of the house.—The gate, at which he had received Lord Henry's messenger, stood open.—Not a face was to be seen about the premises ; his heart shook with apprehension, and the words—"She is gone for ever !" trembled upon his lips.

The storm had drifted to the lower part of the breakfast parlour window upon the ground-floor, and the glass was obscured by the icy fragments: However, a blazing fire had begun to thaw them, and Raymond thought he discovered some object in the room ; cautiously, therefore, approaching the casement, he beheld a scene, which rendered every other sorrow light and uninteresting.—

Ella was safe.—Mortimer's insinuations were groundless.—She was safe—but the certainty of her death would have been preferable to what now met his wrathful eye.—*Ella*, the chaste wife of his affection, placed near the fire her back towards him.—The arm of a noble looking figure passed round her waist, while he seemed to bend in love and ecstacy over a hand she that moment offered to him, and with the other wiped a tear from his eye ————No one else in the room. It was evident she was satisfied with the society she was in.

Drops of anguish scalded his cheek as he furiously turned from the window, and Raymond was ready to suspect even his mother's purity, who could not be supposed ignorant of this strange attachment. — The breakfast bell inducing him to imagine that Lady had joined the culpable pair, he hurried round to the back of the house, and softly opening the folding doors that communicated with

with the hall, had gained the parlour unseen by any one.

The voice of Ella uttering a morning congratulation to the Countess, who had just preceded him, occasioned her unhappy son to stop a moment—and before he could advance—she caught a glimpse of his person, drooping—wet and dirty—his countenance pale and haggard—his fine dark eyes surcharged with tears fixed upon his wife —

“ My son !—my beloved !” exclaimed the Countess, as she hastily threw herself upon his neck, alarming her company with the fondest exclamations.

Raymond returned not her caresses ; but catching his beloved Ella in his arms, who was sinking to the floor, could only utter the words :

K 3

“ Pardon

" Pardon thy distracted husband," and then turning to the object of his frantic jealousy, and offering to take his disengaged hand, received that, and the hearty congratulations of his esteemed and truly revered Lord Berkley—who had employed the first opportunity after his liberation, in visiting Lady Lancaster, and at the moment of De Vallenciennes' impetuous surmise had been shedding a loyal tear to the memory of his deceased King."

The transports and delicate confusion of his adored bride was much in his favour, as it prevented her noticing his request for *pardon*, and the sad situation he was in, soon turned the observations of his friends upon his shocking appearance. — Lord Berkley added his entreaties to the Ladies, that he would accept such comforts and refreshments as were necessary to the restoration of his strength and spirits.—This naturally referred him to the trouble in which Sir Joselin and the

the servants might be involved, and going to the window, which commanded a view of the road, he was happy to perceive that sincere friend, followed by Edred and Ambrose, turning the corner of the house, and ride up to the front gate.—Raymond hastily ran out to introduce Sir Joselin, who felt extremely happy to see De Vallenciennes in safety, whose horse passing them on the Moor inclined the Knight to fear he was lost, in consequence they had been searching for him, till a faint hope that he had reached the house, instigated Sir Joselin to turn his horse that way. The worthy Baronet, after staying a few days in this happy family, departed for Morpeth, loaded with the blessings of those whose interests and safety he had consulted prior to his own.

In compliance with his mother's prudent request, De Vallenciennes would not shock his Ella with an account of her father's sufferings and death ; nor did Lady Lancaster,

in compliment to her daughter's dutiful feelings, ever hint at Lady Fitzroy's defection from virtue to Raymond, though he was given to understand it was *her* he had accosted in the woods, which accounted for the resemblance of her person to Ella, as well as that it was her also whom he had seen in his abrupt appearance on the day she discovered herself to her child.

While Raymond was in the pure enjoyment of that rational felicity, which results from a constant rectitude of principle, and which the defect of temper could neither sully or destroy, a defect that owed much of its strength to unrestrained indulgence, and the ardour of youth, Lord Henry was busied in securing his temporal interest, for even to his mother's dower the circumstance of his birth forbid any claim, and as she lived in the spirit of the ancient times, there was little hope of any great pecuniary advantage arising from her effects.—Of all that Fitzroy possessed, he determined

determined Ella should be heir; but the contested estates, which Mortimer had confiscated as a part of *his* property, reverted to the Crown.

To pain the noble heart of Edward with a knowledge of his father's treatment of Lady Lancaster, was a cruelty of which the generous Nobleman was incapable; indeed, it was, in some degree, unnecessary, as the letters, which that Monarch had already perused, were sufficiently explanatory of her abused confidence, therefore he was silent respecting Raymond's claim of consanguinity, a circumstance before agreed upon by Fitzroy and his disinterested friend; but on the subject of Ella's wrongs he was successfully eloquent.—The King immediately granted his request—the estates, with their arrears, were properly secured—and a Baron's patent, with its lucrative appendages, made out for her happy husband.

Lord

Lord Henry, eager to be ascertained of the safety and felicity of her, for whom he had been thus active, dispatched a courier on the very day which blessed him with the news of his dear niece's continuing under the protection of her valuable friends, and her husband's and Lord Berkley's meeting.

As a counterbalance to the delight this intelligence occasioned, it was intimated that his Highness expected him to conduct his guilty mother Isabella to a Monastery at Warewell.—The terms which embittered this commission were disagreeable, as he was charged to deprive her of every valuable ornament as an additional punishment.

As Fitzroy had been in the habit of considering Isabella from her sex, situation, and custom, with a degree of something like respect (though void of esteem for one, whose crimes had totally unfeminized her character) he felt a strong reluctance to announce a
doom,

doom, of all others the most inimical, to a woman, whose unsubdued pride could not easily accord to the deprivation of those advantages suited to the dignity of her station; but while he was musing upon this untoward business, the appearance of Lady Duval descending the great stair-case to the hall, in which he was walking, suggested a hope of her assistance; for it happily occurred to him that *she* might convey the unwelcome command with less pain to herself, and confusion to the Queen.

Delivering, therefore, the important mandate into her hand, he requested she would carry it to her wretched mistress.

Ignorant of the additional sorrow she was about to inflict, Lady Duval took the paper, and hastened to seek the miserable Isabella, who, regardless of the unpropitious season, had quitted her apartment to wander about the spacious gardens, which, cold and desolate

late as they were, presented a scene of melancholy, consonant to the feelings of her perturbed soul.

The morning was tolerably mild—a gleam of sun-shine illumined the path she had chosen, and gave a cheerful aspect to the cypress-walk, which skirted the South-side of a noble plantation of ever-greens.—At the upper-end, on a pedestal of beautiful granite, stood a bust of her late unhappy consort, Edward, which probably owed its preservation to the lonely solitude of the place.

With light and cautious steps her attendant approached the spot, and was soon discovered by the Queen, who, when first perceived by Lady Duval, was gazing at the inanimate marble—her features shaded with a mixture of grief and horror; but suddenly assuming her usual manner, she demanded the reason of this unwelcome interruption, and, under-
standing

standing it was to deliver a packet, which Lord Henry Fitzroy had that day received from London.

“ From Fitzroy ?” cried Isabella, with a haughty rejection.

“ Nothing *can* be welcome—no—not even if delegated by an ungrateful son to his injured and abused mother.”

“ But read it, my friend.”

Lady Duval respectfully obeyed ; but to orders so severe, the Queen listened with spiteful indignation, and replied to them with extreme rancour ; yet opposition was fruitless, and Fitzroy saw the gates of the religious house for ever closed upon a woman, whose turbulent disposition, and unbridled appetite, added to the most licentious conduct, had left her without a friend, unless the forced attendance of Lady Duval, and

the housekeeper Urfula, might be deemed an act of kindness, though their poverty, after the Queen's downfall, and Mortimer's death, rendered an asylum not only comfortable but necessary.

This business so happily arranged, Fitzroy now turned his sole attention to the valuable society at Lancaster-House.—Lord Berkley, who wished to visit his own house at Berkley-Castle, which, after so long an absence, he doubted not, would claim considerable amendment, would not depart till he had engaged his noble entertainer, and her dear children, to accompany him to London, where he wished to leave them in Lord Henry's society, who had added to the pleasure of his intelligence an invitation to De Vallenciennes to take possession of Spencer-House, and this was another motive for keeping inviolably the secret of her father's imprisonment, and place of his death, from his dutiful child, whose domestic misfortunes would sometimes

intrude in the hour of conviviality, and drive the rose of cheerfulness from her cheek.

Ever mindful of the peace and happiness of others, the Baroness De Vallenciennes requested her mother's faithful attendant might be sent for to join them on the road to London; nor was Edred or Ambrose forgotten, both being gratified with places suitable to their respectable abilities and situations. Lydia joyfully obeyed the summons, and gave her beloved Lady an additional inducement for pious gratitude, informing her that on the day following her departure for Lancaster-House, several stern looking men arrived at the cottage, giving as an ostensible reason for asking relief, their distress arising from losing their way, and being unable to reach the place of their destination without assistance and information—Lydia, ever cautious and prudent, summoned two stout fellows from the barn, whose appearance not being agreeable to her visitors, they departed with reluctance.—The servants assured Lydia they had

had seen the men hanging about for several days, and that they had once inquired who lived at the cottage.—As this seemed to be a confirmation of Mortimer's hints, Raymond casting a look of heart-felt delight towards his Lady, and wiping off the tear that hung upon her face, expressed, in the most animating terms, his thankfulness for Heaven's interference.

About twenty miles distance from the capital, this noble cavalcade was joined by Earl Henry, who impatient to meet his lovely niece, received her from the hands of the revered Countess with ineffable sensations, and after the various and friendly congratulations, which met him from every mouth, were answered, the noble Lady Lancaster, lifting up her meek and tearful eye to Heaven, piously thanked the awful Disposer of every event, that she had lived to glory in the happiness of her children, as well as to see such extraordinary MYSTERIES ELUCIDATED.

F I N I S.



